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MASTERPIECE REVEALED

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the shocking trailer

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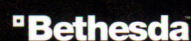
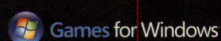
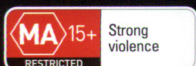
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Team Intro

The first and last word in PS3 games



OUR BOWARE STUDIO VISIT WAS PARTICULARLY

MEMORABLE THANKS to a brilliant discussion with BioWare wunderkind and *Mass Effect 3* Executive Producer Casey Hudson. Hudson made the perhaps obvious, but nonetheless vital observation that interactivity is the key to engaging with a videogame character. Unlike film, where you can empathize with a character without actively participating in their lives, videogames only elicit that kind of attachment from a player if they've had meaningful interaction with the game's AI.

And really, nobody understands this more than BioWare. The *Mass Effect* series has a peculiar effect on people who have invested hours in its seductive space world: we talk about its characters as if they were real people. I, for one, was distraught when Mordin didn't survive my suicide mission in *Mass Effect 2*. I felt as if I had personally let him down, and was pissed off that his fate had been left in my clumsy hands.

Mass Effect 3 is an important game to many of us for this reason. We - as Shepard - have grown alongside these characters, thanks to the marriage of a brilliant script and a sense of freedom borne out of the illusion of limitless interactivity. Check out PSM3's exclusive BioWare studio access p38 to see what's in store for us - and our teammates - in *Mass Effect's* explosive finale.

On another note, this will be my last issue of PSM3. In lieu of a grand exit, it's my pleasure instead to introduce you all to Mr. Shaun Prescott, who I'm sure will do an absolutely stellar job as PSM3's new Editor. Adios!



In the making of this issue...

- 1 departure.
- 1 Shaun Prescott.
- 2 all-nighters.

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BIG THANKS TO:

Jason Lyon, Erin Rolleston, Rob Edwards, Muna Dinkha, Shane Mason, Karl Penn and everyone else at Future. See you on the other side!

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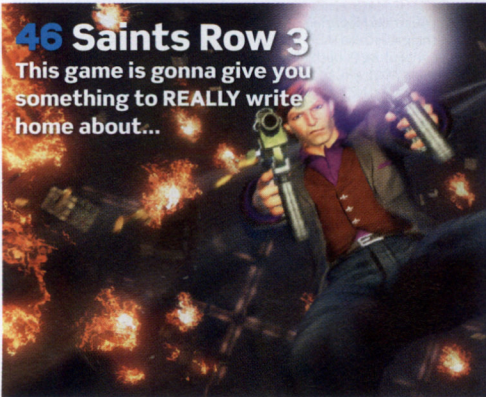


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We ask the eternal question: are gaming spin-off novels actually any good?

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This game is gonna give you something to REALLY write home about...



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Exclusive first look at BioWare's stunning finale



64 Crysis 2

Sure, it's really, really, really good-looking. But is it good?



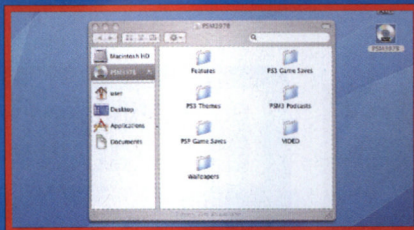
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PlayStation's greatest racer...bar one thing.

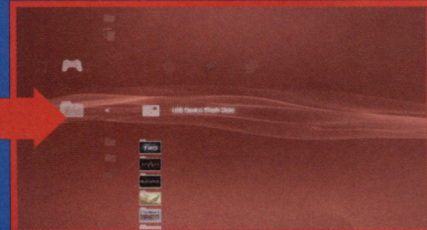
On the Disc

PS3 GAME SAVES

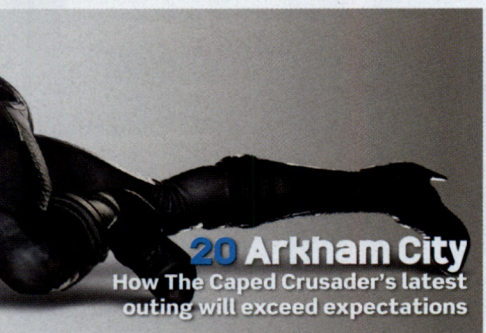
How to use PS3 game saves



Step 1 Insert a USB stick into your computer and make a folder on it called 'PS3', then one inside called 'SAVEDATA'. Drag the saves you want into here.



Step 2 Insert the stick into your PS3, go to 'Game' then 'Save Data'. Click on the USB device, then copy the saves you want by pressing **△** on the game's folder.



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How The Caped Crusader's latest outing will exceed expectations



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Get a sneak peek at what's coming up in issue 21.



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A massive *Socom: Special Forces* PlayStation Move prizepack!

HD VIDEO FILES

- Step 1** Insert Side B of the disc into your PS3, then click across to 'Video' on the cross-media bar (XMB). Select the disc and press **X**.
Step 2 Choose 'Display All' from the menu, and then highlight all the trailers you want to copy and download them to your hard drive.
Step 3 View the trailers in your videos list.

PS3 THEMES

- Step 1** Insert a USB stick into your computer. Create a folder on it called 'PS3'.
Step 2 Create a folder inside called 'THEME' and copy the themes you want into it.
Step 3 Put the USB stick into the PS3, locate the 'System' menu, then 'Themes'. Choose 'Install' and 'Select USB Device'. The themes will install.

PLUS!

PSM3 Podcasts

You do podcasts? Where can I get them?

Although you can find our podcasts on iTunes and on psm3mag.com, you can also get a selection of recent podcasts on Side B. Go to the 'Podcasts' folder to hear them. They're MP3 format, so will work on PC, Mac, iPod and your PS3.



Step 4 And that's it. Simply load up the game, and you'll be able to use our game save. But is it as satisfying as playing honestly? Is it?

Frontline

Hard news, all PlayStation action

HIGHLIGHTS

Meet *Portal 2*'s Chell

History's greatest villains

Why we love sniper rifles

The untold story of the most shocking game trailer ever

How *Dead Island* hit the headlines and the secrets of its harrowing tale

PSM3
Exclusive

Developer interview
and industry reaction

The notion of 'overnight success' used to be an exaggeration. Now it's an understatement, as the world discovered on February 16 when a largely ignored zombie game, *Dead Island*, was thrust, within hours, to every corner of the internet. Its CG trailer, by Axis Animation, touched an emotional nerve like no other ever has.

In three minutes it shows, largely in reverse and slow-motion, why a small girl has gone crashing from a hotel window to a grisly death. Dovetailed with full-speed clips of her failing to beat an army of zombies to the arms of her waiting dad, this elegant rewind puts the pieces of the jigsaw back together, creating a picture of a futile struggle that's heartbreaking and haunting, and helped to no end by a soundtrack that channels the more emotive parts of *Lost*.

Believe the hype

Barely a week after its release, publisher Deep Silver was celebrating over 100,000 fans on the game's Facebook page, over 2.7million views on YouTube, 3.2million tweets and mainstream

media coverage. "It's well thought out and smartly executed," notes Rob Troy, creative director at Hollywood ad agency The Ant Farm, famous for its work with *Call Of Duty*. "They're obviously drawing on ideas from a number of sources - the Max Brooks *Zombie Survival Guide* comes to mind. Having two plots going on at different speeds, starting at two different points, is an interesting approach and very difficult to convey. That's the thing that catches people off-guard."

It all began with an outline brief and example script describing the game's essence - Axis working some filmic magic to create a companion piece featuring a 'turned' mother being discovered by her husband. Though the daughter was in there, Deep Silver wanted a stronger concept and a greater focus on family. They wanted an external aspect, too - much of the game itself is outdoors - and so the opening 'window shot' was born. The finishing touch, once the forward/reverse structure was decided, was to hire Glasgow's sound post-production experts

Savalas to add the melancholic piano soundtrack.

So the trailer ends up less about zombies than families becoming decimated; children ripped from their parents' arms; a monstrous force laying siege to a tourist paradise: all caught on hundreds of hours of intimate home video, cut together by filmmakers with the blissful scenes shot just moments before - the waving from sun decks and hotel room rituals.

All of which seems somewhat inconvenient for *Dead Island* the game, which until now has happily portrayed itself as a first-person slasher about burying various objects into zombies skulls. More recent impressions suggest a cross between *Dead Rising* and

**“Is Techland making a
movie adaptation of its
game’s own trailer?”**



Twitter reaction

The trailer became a twitter trending topic, polarising opinion among gamers and celebs alike...



Hideo Kojima Creative
Director, *Metal Gear Solid*

The trailer for FPS *DEAD ISLAND* is brilliant! I do not think there has been this kind of screen image of zombie before. The framework is innovative. A family and zombie. They made it to go back in time to express. Then, what kind of FPS is the actual game?



Simon Pegg Actor/Writer,
'Shaun Of The Dead'

THIS! IS! FKING!
AMAZING!**



Ben Parfitt Online News
Editor, MCV

There's nothing to learn from watching it. It's not designed to make you think or to explore a point of debate. It's a video that uses an image of a dead girl and images of her dying to create an emotional bond with a product.



Zachary Levi, Actor in US
TV series *'Chuck'*

Possibly the greatest trailer I've ever seen. For any project. Ever.



Ice-T Musician/Actor/
Original Gangster

DOPE!

"In total, the *Dead Island* trailer was tweeted about 3.2 million times, a mixture of moral outrage, high praise and weary dismissal.



the trailer] to characters in the game, but it was an idea that was created for the trailer. That family is now being put together for the game as well."

It raises all kinds of issues far more interesting than a brief controversy (manufactured by journalists) over gore and airborne kids. Is it the case that

Left4Dead where you dash between safehouses, hoping zany weapons, such as an electric machete, don't break. Deep Silver insists, though, that there will be more to it than that.

Being human

"There's a storyline behind the trailer, emotions behind it, which we think is something we should follow," says Georg Larch, Deep Silver's marketing director. "And it fits nicely into the idea of what we're doing with the game. We want to present people who are struck by the zombie outbreak and how they react to it. There are comparisons [in



Brawl, brawl The reverse storytelling adds emotional weight to the inevitable, unfolding tragedy.

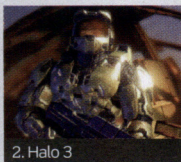
Opinion | The Five Best Game Trailers Ever

There's nothing like a good tease to get you in the mood for what's to come



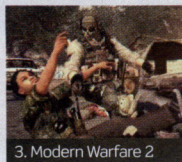
1. Killzone 2

Was it unethical? Was Sony lying or just forgetting to tell the truth? In the immediate aftermath of E3, the stage magic of Sony's press conference (this trailer by Axis and another for *MotorStorm*) was the biggest talking point by far. Mission accomplished, then, by fair means or foul.



2. Halo 3

It would have been nothing without Marty O'Donnell's grandstanding score, but that's not the point. Trailers are as much about timing and delivery as anything, and this one was the crescendo to Microsoft's comeback E3, dropped almost as an encore and piped straight to Xbox Live.



3. Modern Warfare 2

The Ant Farm believes in using cinematographers to shoot real-time game footage from Hollywood angles, occasionally throwing in a curveball like using Eminem for its *Modern Warfare 2* launch trailer. Over eight million views on YouTube and the series' massive first-week sales tell the rest of the story.



4. Grand Theft Auto IV

Borrowing Philip Glass's 'Pruit Igoo' from 'landscape poem' movie *Koyaanisqatsi*, the announcement of *GTA IV* was so economical it didn't need the game's name, just the number. Like *Koyaanisqatsi*, the trailer runs with the theme of modern life, quickly suggesting a game of dizzying scope.



5. Goku Makaimura

Hah! And you thought they'd all be obvious. This live action (!) short catches up with Arthur, Capcom's gallant leaping lord, after 15 years of unemployment. He's ironing his boxer shorts, pawing his jewels, haunting karaoke bars and generally failing to be of much use to anyone. Japanese, hilarious.

Notable mentions Metal Gear Solid 4 (War Has Changed) | SSX Tricky | Assassin's Creed | Silent Hill 2 | Resident Evil 4 | MGS2 | MGS3 BioShock | The Beatles Rock Band | GTA Vice City



All things bite and beautiful The trailer taps into your subconscious fears about your (in)ability to protect the ones you love from an inevitable fate.



Tabloid hack The game's less controversial than the trailer (no families, thankfully), but you can hack pieces of flesh from your zombie foes using ad-hoc weapons. Ugh.

Dead Island: The Movie

Of the many places touched by the *Dead Island* trailer within hours of its release, some of the more significant were desks of major Hollywood studios. "It's tough to see how this personal and intimate moment is going to get a 90-minute film," says Larch, "but then it's all going to be based on the idea of the island and everything behind that. There's a lot that can be done and a lot that might come out of that, but it's up to the brain pool behind the whole thing." Aitken, meanwhile, believes Hollywood's drawn to "a feeling in the trailer that can be expanded." ...into a role for Jason Statham, no doubt.



weapons. But those weapons are scarce, so if you want to slay the undead you'll need to get creative. Attach charges to a machete for electrified decapitation, or build sticky bombs. It's a tribute to the best zombie games and films, shipped to a super sunny location and turned up to 11.

Fair game

Teaser vs trailer, CG vs real-time, cinema vs game. These distinctions are important, and while there's no controversy in making a stunning piece of game-related art – "it's not about whether it's a frickin' game," says Troy, "promote it as a piece of entertainment that people are going to be a part of" – it does leave viewers scratching their heads. Comments for the teaser on YouTube cough up platitudes such as 'Day 1!', even though the trailer gives no meaningful impression of gameplay.

We point out that Axis wasn't even allowed to associate itself with the trailer until shortly after release, and ask if there's an element of lying by omission there. A deliberate attempt to confuse Techland's and Axis' talent and ideas? No, believes

Troy. "It's quite typical for agencies to be embargoed for an indefinite period of time simply because the publisher or developer doesn't want you competing against the buzz and what the trailer's all about."

"There are eyeballs on it and they're getting attention. That's the goal at this point. They achieved it in spades," states Ant Farm director Lisa Riznikove. "Especially at a time when it's really hard to break out. Whether it works as a marketing campaign remains to be seen; it could become another *Snakes On A Plane* [big hype, not-so-big box office]. To be honest, to sell lots of games you gotta have two things: good marketing and a good game." First one ticked, then. Now it's down to you, Techland.

developer Techland is, to some degree, making a movie adaptation of its game's own trailer? And if the game is to be a hack-and-slash that speaks in gaming's usual clumsy terms, not the trailer's CG poetry, where do you draw the line when it comes to being honest with your consumers?

"I've much less of an issue if the trailer's quite obviously a supporting piece of artwork, describing aspects of the game without pretending that it's you playing," says trailer director and Axis cofounder Stuart Aitken. "I thought where DS wanted to go with the trailer was fantastic, and I think one of the reasons for that is because it's a self-contained thing in its own

right. I'm much happier with that than the opposite. But there's a fine line: CGs are generally going to look better no matter how great a game engine is."

And in fairness, the game does look good. It's an open-world, first-person adventure set on a tropical island. Even better, it boasts four-player co-op, (think *Left4Dead* with palm trees) and weaponry you can pimp up at workbenches. You play one of four characters – Sam B the hip-hop star, Purna the bodyguard, Logan the surfer, or Xian Mei the hot hotel worker – charged with completing missions to survive, and maybe finding out what caused the undead outbreak. The tasks we've seen are basic, though – like fighting to a set location to protect a survivor. Each has their own special skills, like Sam B's fetish for hardcore melee



Silver Scream Not seen the trailer? Try a YouTube search...it's a must-see.

The Opinionator

"Bulletstorm is the low point in a devalued genre"

At some point in *Bulletstorm* – either after drunkenly ripping a gang of mutants in half with one blast from my quadruple-barrelled shotgun, or after wrapping grenades around a soldier to blow him and his mates up in an orgy of fire and high scores – the adrenaline faded and I wondered: "What next?"

What *Bulletstorm* represents is the end point of an evolutionary process; a process that for too long has valued voyeurism and big cocking guns over anything real. And now we find ourselves with nowhere left to go, and no more thrills to be found. This has to be the end. How can anyone make a game that's more overblown?

Big guns

It would be fine, praiseworthy even, if the concept hadn't polluted the entire first-person shooter genre. Now every game involves brainlessly unquestioning gun-love, 'spectacular' set-pieces and ludicrously

macho action. Reality is not sidelined so much as booted straight into an electric fence. *Call Of Duty*, *Killzone*, even *Bioshock* – strip away the artsy veneer and the central concern

is how to extract the most visceral enjoyment from mass destruction. I'm not a total curmudgeon –

I admit it can be fun, but it's certainly not innovation.

Which is why I'm so excited when David Cage announced at this year's

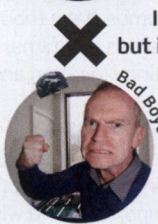
Game Developers

Conference that he's working on a war game, possibly – hopefully – an FPS that will confront the horrible reality of

war. "War," says Cage, the man behind *Heavy Rain*, "Isn't fun."

Games, of course, are fun, but there are many more varieties of fun out there than big, dunderheaded bangs.

Just a bit of thought – a bit of innovation – would make a huge difference to a genre that, at its peak, has become a mockery of itself. **Richard Dennis**



Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

Uncharted 3 will be Move compatible



THE TRUTH

So you've heard that Nathan Drake's Arabian adventure will let you destroy men with a flick of your Move controller, huh? Don't get your hopes up. Recently, Justin Richmond (game director on *Drake's Deception*) debunked all talk of motion-control: "It's looking like we aren't going to support Move on this game. I feel like the right way to use Move is to design a game around the peripheral itself and make it awesome rather than add it into a game that was never designed with Move in mind." This follows on from Valve recently confirming that *Portal 2* won't support Sony's motion controller, despite strong speculation that Move support was a part of the puzzler's development. At least virtual extinction-ern-up *Cabela's Dangerous Hunts 2011* will support the device. Phew.

Pointy elbows You can take enemies down violently, or just pacify them to proceed.



No hype. No filler. The top five new games we're really excited about

1 Deus Ex: Human Revolution

A welcome release

Good news. Namco Bandai's hotly anticipated sci-fi shooter will hit shelves on August 25.

Coming seven years after the disappointing *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, *Human Revolution* pits you as Adam Jensen, a cybernetically enhanced

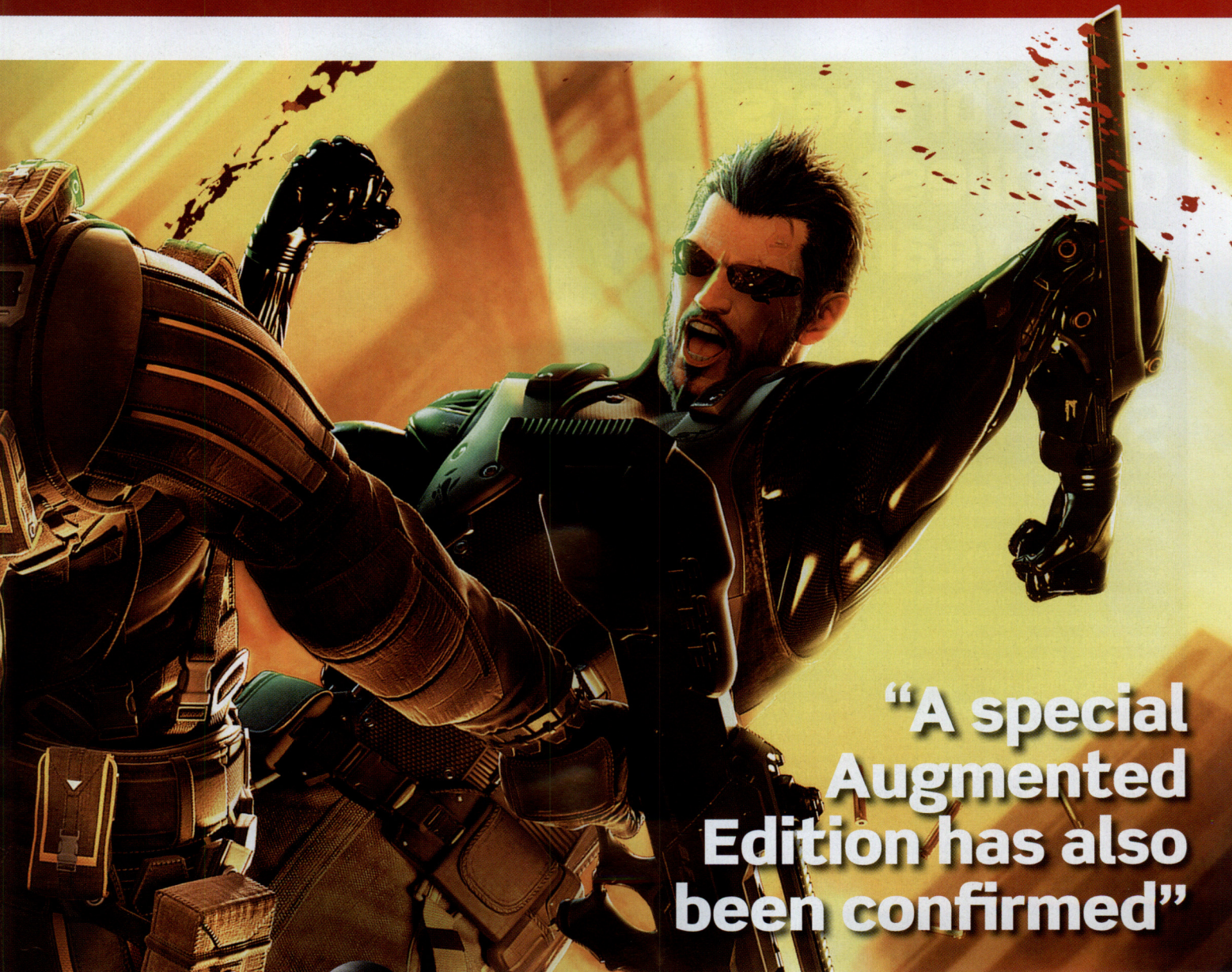
private security officer, investigating the conspiracy of his own 'death' and bionic rebirth. Key hook? The variety of ways you tackle scenarios, from stealth, to distraction, to assault.

A special Augmented Edition has also been confirmed, which will include a making-of documentary, motion comic and 40-page art book.

Pub Namco | **Dev** Eidos Montreal | **ETA** August 25



It's a date After being a tease for so long, the game has finally got a release date.



**“A special
Augmented
Edition has also
been confirmed”**

2 Mass Effect 3 Music maker

Mass Effect is famed for its music, but despite composer Jack Wall parting ways with developer BioWare on amicable terms, it might, oddly, be about to get better.

BioWare has managed to lure Hollywood composer Clint Mansell (star of eclectic early 90s indie band Pop Will Eat Itself) in to score Commander Shepard's final space opera. Mansell boasts a seriously impressive CV, recently scoring *The Wrestler*, the Oscar-winning *Black Swan* and the tonally-similar *Moon*. Plot? Alien 'reapers' have invaded earth (you can see London crumble in the teaser trailer) and Shepherd needs to assemble a team – again – to repel 'em. Check out p40 for exclusive details.

Pub EA | Dev Bioware | ETA November 2011



3 Anarchy Reigns Sharing the pain

Anarchy Reigns is about the joy of punching someone in the head on the other side of the world,” says Platinum Games (the *Bayonetta* folk) producer Atsushi Inaba. Featuring fights on the back of warships and in post-apocalyptic cities with frequent Action Trigger Events, *Anarchy Reigns* looks set to be a fun, messy affair.

Pub Sega | Dev Platinum | ETA Spring 2011

4 BioShock Infinite Getting around

“If you’ve got a city made of floating islands,” says Ken Levine, director of *Infinite*. “How would people get around?” The answer is Sky-Lines, which he explained in detail at PAX. In an early, untextured area of Columbia,



Anarchy Reigns, BioShock Infinite and Tomb Raider
Chaotic Japanese action and revolution in the skies.

Levine freely hooks and unhooks from a network of criss-crossed rails, moving freely around the map. Sky-Lines are integrated in, and are more than just a means of moving between levels.

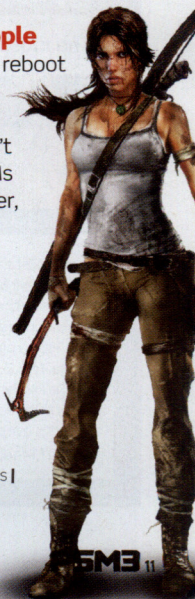
Pub 2K | Dev Irrational | ETA TBC 2012

5 Tomb Raider Voice of the people

Concrete news on Lara's reboot is pretty thin on the ground. Still, at least we know Keeley Hawes won't be reprising her role as Ms Croft. Speaking on Twitter, Crystal Dynamics confirmed that the *Underworld* voice actress wouldn't be reprising her role. And on the subject of her replacement, he went on to say: “We're still on the lookout.”

Pub Ubisoft | Dev Crystal Dynamics |

ETA TBA



Meet Drake's deadliest enemy... a 57-year-old lady

Uncharted 3's evil pensioner hints at secret past 'twist'

She doesn't look quite as intimidating as Serbian warlord Lazarevic from *Uncharted 2*, but the recently announced über villain of *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception*, Katherine Marlowe shouldn't be underestimated. She might soon qualify for a free bus pass, after all. And admittedly, she looks more Helen Mirren than arch criminal mastermind. Nevertheless, this old wench commands a centuries-old order dating back to the court of Queen Elizabeth I, which is full of spies and occult advisors fiercely loyal to Marlowe's quest.

Old dog, new tricks

That quest just happens to revolve around stealing Sir Francis Drake's ring. Which could be a problem for our beloved Nathan Drake, seeing as our

fortune hunter has been wearing the thing around his neck since the original *Uncharted*. With both Nate and his new nemesis claiming rightful ownership of the trinket, we doubt the two will be settling differences over a cup of tea.

Developer Naughty Dog promises Marlowe will be a more cerebral foe than the dastards Drake has confronted in the past. Apparently, she uses fear as a weapon to confuse and manipulate her enemies. While the lackeys in her clandestine group are highly trained in covert - no doubt murderous - tactics.

Other than a recently unveiled cut-scene showing Katherine and her goons smugly threatening our treasure hunters in an alley behind a nightclub, the full role she'll play in *Deception* is still shrouded in mystery. Though given her age and how much Naughty Dog like a bickering romance, we wouldn't be surprised if she and Sully were former lovebirds.

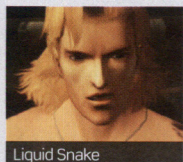


It's raining men Much like Mary Poppins, it takes a woman of confidence to use an umbrella in the dry.

Pub Sony | Dev Naughty Dog | ETA November 2011

Opinion | Top 5 greatest PlayStation villains

The most dastardly no-gooders ever to besmirch Sony's consoles - but which are the most evil?



Liquid Snake

During *Metal Gear Solid*, Snake's evil twin threatens the Whitehouse with nuclear war. He's a persistent swine, too. Even after Snake kills him, he comes back in the form of Ocelot's evil possessed arm in *MGS2*.



Sephiroth

The ultra emo baddie of *Final Fantasy VII* might look a little effeminate, but seeing as he's got zero qualms with running innocent girls through with seven foot swords, we'd advise on not joking about his appearance. To his face, anyway.



Albert Wesker

If videogames have taught us nothing else, it's to never trust someone wearing shades. A point amply proved by *Resident Evil's* treacherous S.T.A.R.S. agent, who's made a career out of both back and literal stabbing.



The G-Man

The *Half-Life* series' chief antagonist is a mystery, wrapped in an enigma, bundled up in a damn expensive suit. His ultimate motives may be unknown, but we'd be amazed if they didn't have something to do with global conquest.



Pyramid Head

The villain so horrendous he goes about sexually assaulting the rest of *Silent Hill 2's* monstrous abominations. If his grotesque, terrifying appearance wasn't bad enough, Pyramid Head is also backed up by a ridiculously huge cleaver.

"It'd be no surprise if she and sully were former lovebirds"

Is Heavy Rain dead and buried?

Quantic Dream boss has "closed the book" on Ethan's story, he tells PSM3

Hheavy Rain fans who are keeping their fingers crossed for a sequel to the 2010 adventure are going to be disappointed: Quantic Dream boss David Cage has ruled out a follow-up happening any time in the near future.

The title has sold two million copies on PS3 since its release in February last year, and bagged a multitude of awards for Quantic, including the coveted Games Designers gong at the Japan Game Awards.

Dream team

However, Cage told PSM3 that he wants to "surprise" gamers with future projects – and that a *Heavy Rain* sequel just wouldn't cut the mustard.

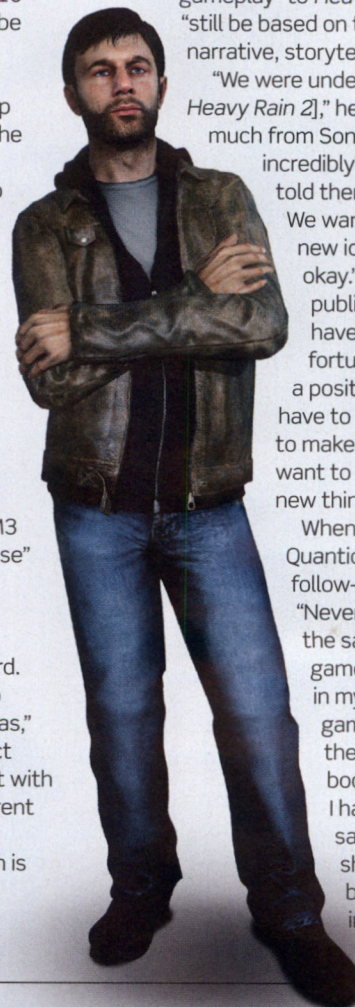
"I want to continue to innovate; to try new ideas," he said. "If people expect another *Heavy Rain*, just with another story and different characters, they'll be disappointed. Innovation is really important to us."

Cage promised that Quantic's next project

would have a "different style, different genre, different tone and different gameplay" to *Heavy Rain*, but will "still be based on the same ideas of narrative, storytelling and emotions."

"We were under pressure [to make *Heavy Rain 2*]," he admitted, "not so much from Sony – they've been incredibly fair with that. We told them we had no interest. We wanted to move on with new ideas. They said: 'Well, okay.' I don't know of many publishers who would have said that. We are fortunate enough to be in a position where we don't have to make a sequel just to make some money. We want to be pioneers; to try new things."

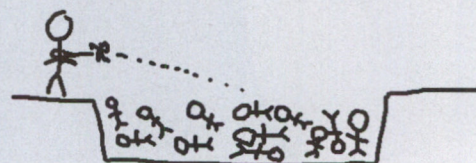
When pressed on whether Quantic could ever create a follow-up, Cage reiterated: "Never say never, but at the same time I see my games like a moment in my life... Once the game is finished, I turn the page, I close the book. I try to move on. I have new things to say, new things to share. I don't like to go back. I'm interested in the future, not the past."



Stick man challenge

Can you guess what game this is?

Are you ready to get guessing? If you think you know what game we've rendered in the ancient medium of the stick man, you can win precisely, absolutely, empirically *nothing*. Send your answers to letters@PSM3.com.au. If you fancy drawing your own challenge, send your scribbblings to the same address.



Meet the real Chell from Portal 2

What she thinks of Chell's 'racy' new look

Meet Alesia Glidewell, the actress (and writer/producer) who inspires *Portal 2*'s main character Chell. Alesia has now provided her face for both *Portal* games, though Chell has gone under the polygonal knife for the sequel.

In the original *Portal*, Chell was wrapped up in a prison-esque orange jumpsuit, but now she's sporting a racier look. Something Glidewell is in favour of: "I like it! She's cute and shows a little more skin. I did have an affinity for the orange jumpsuit, mind."

Fan reaction to the redesign has been somewhat mixed, with some thinking it's merely a ploy to ramp up the sex appeal of a game that's essentially about shifting cubes. Valve's art team has tried to clarify the change, saying, "It helps her stand out more as an individual, as opposed to a numbered, anonymous test subject."

Does Alesia follow fan feedback? "I've never really been tempted to follow it. My mother does and some of my friends will occasionally throw me a link. I enjoy seeing some of the drawings people make." Go gentle, OK?

Pub EA | Dev Valve | ETA Out Now



Five reasons why Skyrim is the most exciting RPG on PS3

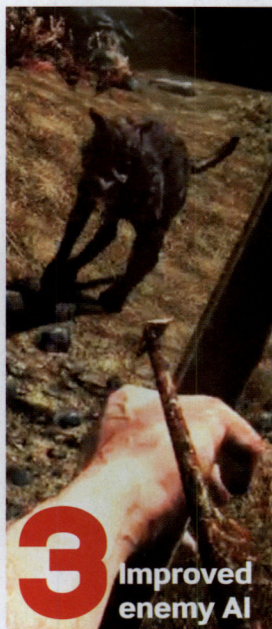
The most important moments from the latest trailer, analysed



1 Exploring Skyrim



2 Battling dragons



3 Improved enemy AI



4 Two hands



5 Dragon's soul

For an *Elder Scrolls* fan, watching the new *Skyrim* trailer is almost too exciting. The rousing music, the sweeping vistas, the dragons – it's an enticing glimpse into a world we'll likely be spending 100+ hours in. It's also full of gameplay clues, five of which we'll analyse here.

(1) Exploring Skyrim will be immensely exciting, with forests, caves, mountains, towns and cities all ripe for discovery. Its vast mountains eclipse even *Oblivion*'s highest peaks, and there's a lot more interesting scenery, like this rocky outcrop with a town resting precariously on top. This will be our home for many, many hours.

We also catch glimpses of our hero **(2) battling dragons**. It all looks a bit staged and cinematic, but Bethesda say this is how these battles will play out in-game. They're real-time skirmishes that see your scaly foe swooping overhead, giving you a brief chance to swing your sword.

Another scene sees our hero aiming his bow at a wild dog in the countryside. **(3) Improved enemy AI** means that not everything in *Skyrim* will attack you on sight. Some creatures will simply ignore you, only attacking if you give them a reason to – like shooting them. This means no more constant fleeing as you explore.

Town and out The trailer also reveals shots of a town and tavern populated by NPCs that actually look like people, rather than weird, stiffly-animated meat puppets. Let's hope the voice acting improves too.

Look, ma – **(4) two hands!** Yes, it sounds ridiculous, but in this scene we see our hero battling a hairy three-eyed troll using two hands at once – one for his sword, the other for magic. A small change that should add a much-needed layer of tactical depth to the first-person combat.

Finally, after besting the dragon, the hero strikes a manly pose and absorbs some kind of swirling energy. This is the **(5) dragon's soul**, which grants you special new magical powers, or 'Dragon Shouts', making killing the beasts worth the immense effort.

Pub Bethesda | Dev Bethesda | ETA November

The PSM3 Wrong Righter

Squirting the lemon-fresh scent of truth over past issues

UNCHARTED 3 WILL BE RELEASED SPRING 2011

☒ RIGHT

In PSM3 14's PS3 exclusives special we talked about the as-yet unrevealed *Drake's Deception*: "expect Uncharted 3 next spring", and lo and behold... PSM 14 page 45

November 2007, and the sequel in October 2009. Should Naughty Dog follow the pattern expect *Uncharted 3* next Spring: which makes now a good time to begin recording.

As for setting, we've seen jungles and snow-capped mountains. More...

SO RIGHT

MASS EFFECT 2 DLC WILL BE ON THE DISC

☐ WRONG

"Featuring six hours of DLC plus the main game," we said, excitedly. Turns out you had to download it after all. Sorry about that.

will be the best. Featuring six hours of DLC plus the main game, plus an interactive comic that tells the story so far while letting you make

OOOOOPS

PSM 16 page 41

TOMB RAIDER WILL RECEIVE A REBOOT

☒ RIGHT

As predicted, *Tomb Raider* is receiving a reboot. We predicted this ages ago: the Insider strikes again.

MEGA RIGHT

PSM 14 page 10

Another imminent franchise reboot is **Tomb Raider**, due to be unveiled in late 2010, apparently starring a young Lara Croft and set in an open world. We

Epic win Cliff B is founder of Epic Games, creators of the Unreal Engine.



**“You work your
ass off then
basically a kid
ruins your life”**

PSM3 talks *Bulletstorm* with Cliff Bleszinski
and People Can Fly's Adrian Chmielarz



The **PSM3** Interview

Bulletstorm is the shooter that asks you to 'kill with skill', inviting you to get creative with your gunplay. It's a refreshing dose of fun, something reflected in the 91% we awarded the game in last issue's review. So, does this spell a new dawn for shooters? Are skillshots the new 'hiding behind cover' – the feature every new FPS must have? We caught up with development lead Adrian Chmielarz (from People Can

Fly) and games industry legend Cliff Bleszinski (Epic) to chat fun, piracy, and creative swears.

PSM3: How important is the idea of 'fun' to modern video games?

CB: I think fun is something that Nintendo has been betting the farm on for many years, to the point where if you look at many Nintendo games, story is not even... it's just rescue the princess yet again. What is really motivating Mario? What drives him, right? But somehow *Mario Galaxy* and *Mario Galaxy 2* are some of the most fun games you'll ever play. The Mario reduses are still a blast and sell millions of units, right? I think we've gotten hung up on story in the last few years.

I think when you can merge both, and have that kind of crunchy, fun/core loop and reinvent the way you think about a shooter as Adrian and his crew have done, and then put a cool narrative on top of it, I think you have a potential classic. You need both. I've said before, if you have an amazing story and the game is absolutely horrible and un-fun to play then you still have a bad game. If I want a great story I'll go read a great book. If you have a game with a horrible story and great game mechanics, you still have a great game. But if you have both, that's really the sweet spot to hit. I think *BioShock* did that well, and I hope we have something classic here.

PSM3: There's a lot of very colourful language in the game, did you ever look at something and think 'No, we can't say that'?

AC: It's actually a really funny problem. When you do a count of how many 'f***s' or 's**ts' we have in the game – it's surprisingly low. So you can have a military shooter where it's "Let's go f***ing secure the f***ing LZ!" but that's nothing creative. When you have "Let's secure the f***ing LZ you fungal rim job" then it's a different story.

CB: It's practically a PG-13 (laughs).

AC: It stays with you. It's more creative, it's more juicy, it's more meaty. For that very reason we offer the option to turn it off. I laugh at this but I actually came up with this scenario myself: my kid is in the other room; she can't watch what I'm playing but she can hear it. So I can turn off the language and keep on playing and nobody's bothered.

PSM3 Access

Exclusive double
developer interview

Duty Calls This may look like a meat-headed FPS, but it's a smart shooter.



PSM3: If you were to look back on *Bulletstorm* five years from now, how would you want people to remember it?

CB: I like to refer to things as a min / max. The minimum is that players remember it as a classic shooter that turned the world on its head when everyone was used to...

AC: [Interrupts] That's the minimum?

CB: That's the minimum, yeah. The maximum is that suddenly a wave of clones come out that feature skillshot gameplay and fun dialogue, and some maybe get it right, and some maybe get it wrong. *Gears Of War* has been such a success for us and it's been incredibly flattering to see the sheer amount of cover-based shooters come out since then. So who knows, maybe skillshot games will make people think differently about how they make their shooters in the future.

PSM3: We think there's definitely been a move away from the *Gears* template recently, *Vanquish* being a great example.

CB: *Gears* was a freight train, a wild Wild West locomotive, and *Vanquish* was the bullet train. And that's awesome. It just breaks my heart it didn't have multiplayer. I would loved to have had that.



Ten lashes The energy whip is key to performing most of the brutal Skillshots in *Bulletstorm*.

"If *Gears* was a freight train: *Vanquish* was the bullet train"

**Who is...
Cliff Bleszinski?**

Founder of Epic Games, the studio that created the Unreal Engine (used in the majority of shooters on PS3) and the 360-exclusive *Gears Of War*, Cliffy B has become a huge figure in the games industry. He is Producer on *Bulletstorm*.

**Who is...
Adrian Chmielarz?**

Founder of Poland-based People Can Fly, Adrian's first game at the studio was the PC cult hit *Painkiller*. Since then Chmielarz has worked on a PC version of *Gears Of War*, which is one of the reasons Epic chose to partner with this studio on *Bulletstorm*.

PSM3: How do you feel that the recent PS3 hack is going to affect the industry? Do you think it's going to be a storm in a teacup, or is it something much more?

CB: Hackers are one of those things that... if they find something that's a vulnerability you're glad they found it so you can fix it. But the more you challenge them the more they will dig in and hack further away. One of the beauties of consoles is they're largely a closed system, and once you start peeling that away then suddenly a lot of very important things for online gaming can start falling, and as a creative I think it's fascinating but at the same time it makes me nervous.

AC: Hackers always need an excuse for hacking. It's like: "You take limits away from us and we will hack your console". Everybody knows it's just an excuse. The biggest problem is hacks to multiplayer. Cheats can ruin an online experience and that's heart-breaking as a developer. You have a team of a hundred people, that's a hundred families basically. And you work your ass off. Game development has always been like that – long nights, weekends, crunch times: everything. You do your best and then a kid ruins your life. So that's heart-breaking.



Why We Love...

Sniper Rifles

Murder from a mile away.
It's the only way to win...

Are you a maniac?

Not in real life, of course. We wouldn't want to give you the impression we spend our free-time camped out in church bell towers. Instead, we're taking about those virtual weapons of destruction that let us snipe the eyeballs off alien beasties, zombies and Hitler's henchmen from half a kilometre away. Death from a distance is just so much more civilised.



popping off headshots? Camping may be to online shooters what talking loudly on your phone is to cinema viewing. As long as it helps keep your kill/death ratio in the plus, though, who gives a damn?

Can I kill with skill?

You sure can, because rifles are getting increasingly deadly with every passing shooter. Just take *Bulletstorm's* beast. It's so advanced in hi-tech murderology, it even lets you steer the flight of the bullet after it's left the chamber. The sniper rifle is a gentleman's weapon.

Sniping, old and new

Past Silent Scope, Resident Evil 4, Medal Of Honor, Bulletstorm, Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare, Sniper Elite. **Future** Deus Ex: Human Revolution, BioShock Infinite, Ghost Recon.

Distant death, you say?

In your average online FPS, the humble sniper rifle is the gun of choice for the lazy-ass gamer. After all, why sprint around nervously firing an AK47, when you can take a load off in some secluded high ground, all the while

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

Radical have announced **Prototype 2**, a sequel to the shape-shifting supervillain sim from 2009. You play as a new character who is hunting down Alex Mercer, lead character of the original.

Sony are considering making a version of **PlayStation Home** for the NGP. They're also thinking about developing games for the service in co-operation with players.

A special educational **LittleBigPlanet 2** DLC pack is being released especially for use in schools.

A developer's twitter feed suggests **Soulcalibur V** is coming to PS3. The beat-em-up sequel needs to shake things up, so expect a dramatic new setting... or time-scale. Perhaps.

"Ninja Theory are seeking voice talent for DMC"

The current trend of classic games being remade in HD like *Tomb Raider* and *Prince Of Persia* is set to continue, with a major PS franchise set to reveal its new HD glory at E3. No clues. But you'll like it.

Capcom's **Devil May Cry** reboot is in hiding, but developers Ninja Theory are currently auditioning and hiring voice actors in the UK for the project. Will the new 'emo' Dante have a cockney accent? We hope not.

Capcom are also releasing a new shooter developed by SOCOM creators Slant Six based on the **Resident Evil** series. Rumour has it that it'll be more action focused, with a multiplayer element of some kind.

More Capcom news? But of course. The publisher is said to be revealing a new game at its Captivate event that's unlike anything they've ever done before, and that it's 'very pretty'. It's new IP, so your guess is as good as ours...

Slice and dice Expect *Calibur's* cast to look a bit different in the new game.

Back to Sony's NGP, the team behind **Monster Hunter** – the best-selling game in the original PSP's short history, shifting multiple millions – produced their demo for the NGP unveiling in only a month or so. It's not confirmed, but seems certain *Monster Hunter* will appear on the new console.

Crysis 2 creators Crytek say they plan to release a development kit of their incredible CryEngine 3 soon, which means more games are likely to implement the stunning tech.

Capcom's Yoshinori Ono recently stated that **Street Fighter IV Arcade Edition** would never see a home console release, but now hints that it might after all. The game will feature *Street Fighter III's* Yun and Yang, as well as Evil Ryu and Oni Akuma.

An ex-Starbreeze employee, creators of *Riddick*, has revealed the company was working on **The Bourne Ascendancy** – but it's been canned. Maybe next time, Jason.





Is Los Angeles a good location for the new GTA?

As rumours intensify, we debate the rumoured LA setting of *GTA V*



YES IT'S GOT EVERYTHING FROM HILLS TO HIGH-RISES AND HOVELS

The PSM3 Debate



NO WE'VE DONE CALIFORNIA TO DEATH IN SAN ANDREAS, ARGUES ANDY HARTUP

Despite *GTA*'s cities being key to the experience, their locations are at the same time slightly irrelevant. If Rockstar are setting *V* in LA, it will be brand new – not a retread of *San Andreas*. After all, *IV*'s Liberty City was not *GTAIII*'s.

Rockstar are storytellers and satirists, not just game-makers, so they'll choose wherever suits the story they're telling. What story will that be? The economic crisis is just too big to ignore – and rammed with the sleazy, egomaniacal criminals Rockstar so loves – while social media, computing and the internet continue to grow. Where better to explore it than LA, the sprawling mass of finance, suburbs and violence just a few hours from Silicon Valley?

There may be evidence for a US setting. Rockstar's parent company Take-Two is casting a project codenamed 'Rush', and the characters are very *GTA*: FBI agents, soccer moms, moneylenders, playboys, cult leaders. They're stoners, misogynists, addicts, neurotics, idiots, egotists and delusionals. There are hints of a return of SA-esque countryside, too – several live 'out in the sticks', while another has a love of 'exploring the wilderness'. It also points to a change from the creaking rags to riches structure to something multifaceted like *The Wire*, where the issues spread across all levels of society. *San Andreas* was a technical wow, yet slow and grim – what could be better than a sexy new go at LA? **Steve Williams**

Steve Williams doesn't mind where it's set... as long as there are trees and it's not New Yawn-K.

Hot rumours suggest the new *GTA* will be set in Los Angeles. Various casting calls and website trademarks point to a modern yarn told in and around LA, potentially riffing off Hollywood and California's world-leading technology industry.

YAWN. Look, I loved *San Andreas*: tooling about in the desert, waging gang warfare, turning CJ into a bloater... fun times. But *GTA* needs to innovate, to be razor-sharp in the way it lampoons society. For me, heading back to California feels like a cop-out.

I'd love to see *GTA* go back to London and deal with the fall-out of the banking crisis. You've got everything you need in London, from teenage gangs to sleazy bankers and expenses-snaffling politicians – there's massive scope to run a riches to rags to riches story. So you don't want to go to London again? How about Beijing? Sydney? *Auckland*? Anywhere that reminds us why no-one else can touch Rockstar North for thrilling originality. There's no doubt that the next *GTA* will be great – Rockstar North don't make games by halves – but I worry for its cutting edge, especially with games like *Saint's Row* snapping at its heels.

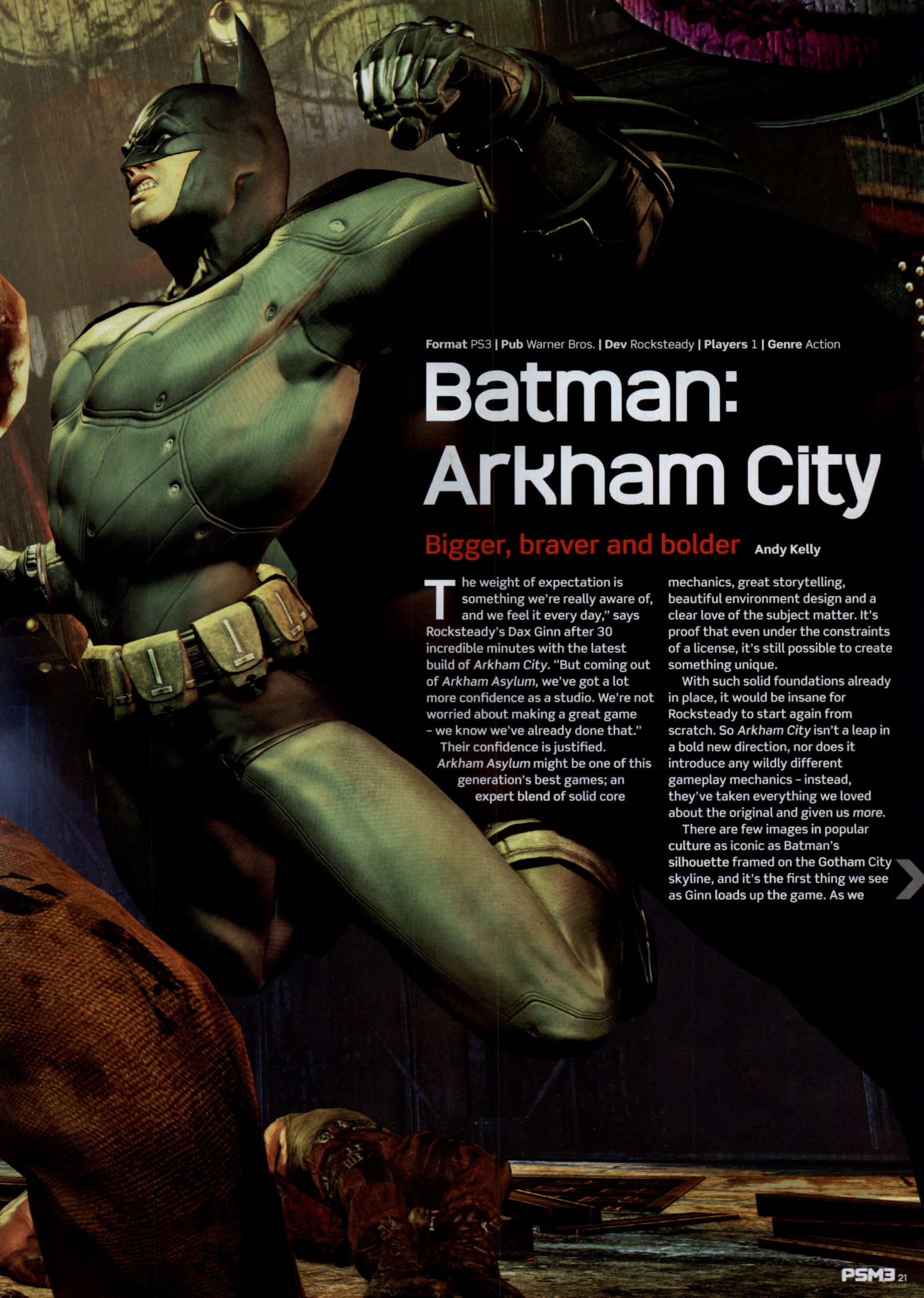
I worry for games as a whole if *GTA* returns to safe territory like LA. If *GTA* – the series that always leads, always dares to innovate – refuses to shift to new settings and tell new, intelligent stories, then what hope is there for continued creativity? Very little – just a sea of wannabes set in New York, LA, and Genero-ville, USA. **Andy Hartup**

Andy Hartup wants to see *Grand Theft Auto* break new ground and take us somewhere fresh.

Previews

The big games, the toughest





Format PS3 | Pub Warner Bros. | Dev Rocksteady | Players 1 | Genre Action

Batman: Arkham City

Bigger, braver and bolder Andy Kelly

The weight of expectation is something we're really aware of, and we feel it every day," says Rocksteady's Dax Ginn after 30 incredible minutes with the latest build of *Arkham City*. "But coming out of *Arkham Asylum*, we've got a lot more confidence as a studio. We're not worried about making a great game - we know we've already done that."

Their confidence is justified.

Arkham Asylum might be one of this generation's best games; an expert blend of solid core

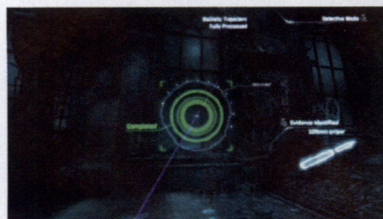
mechanics, great storytelling, beautiful environment design and a clear love of the subject matter. It's proof that even under the constraints of a license, it's still possible to create something unique.

With such solid foundations already in place, it would be insane for Rocksteady to start again from scratch. So *Arkham City* isn't a leap in a bold new direction, nor does it introduce any wildly different gameplay mechanics - instead, they've taken everything we loved about the original and given us *more*.

There are few images in popular culture as iconic as Batman's silhouette framed on the Gotham City skyline, and it's the first thing we see as Ginn loads up the game. As we



Open for business Where *Asylum* was a tight, scripted game, *Arkham City* is more open world.



Clued up Batman scans a bullet's trajectory to pinpoint the location of Joker's sniper tower.

stare saucer-eyed at the screen, he spins the camera around, revealing the staggering detail of the game world. Monolithic skyscrapers tower in the distance, choppers buzz past shining spotlights on the litter-strewn streets below, neon signs flicker, Batman's cape ripples in the wind... It's all astonishing to look at.

Stroll on

"We want to give players a sense of freedom this time which, when you think about it, is perfect for Batman. He's the kind of character who should be able to make decisions about where he goes and what he does," says Ginn.

Yes, *Arkham City* is open world, where *Asylum* was a linear roller coaster of set-pieces and boss encounters. This whole city – an expanse of Gotham that's become a makeshift asylum, housing thousands of dangerous criminals – is unlocked from the start.

"Interiors are locked to specific missions," says Ginn, "But 80% of the game takes place on the streets. This means you can begin the game and just start exploring." But can Rocksteady give us this much freedom, yet still tell a compelling story?

"Plot is really important to us, so side-missions won't be like, 'Collect 50 of these random things,' they'll be tied directly into the narrative – like 'track down Zsasz' or 'interrogate the

Riddler's informants'. So you'll always feel like you're part of an overall plot arc, whether

you're following the core story or not."

The biggest change to the way you control Batman is that he can now fly. Technically he's gliding, as he did in the first game, but now when you're about to slow and lose altitude, you can nose-dive, build speed and remain in the air indefinitely. You can also snag distant objects with your grapple hook – including passing helicopters – to slingshot yourself forwards for an even bigger speed boost.

Flight plan

As you swoop around the city, you'll occasionally spot people on the streets below being beaten by thugs. They need your help. Saving them might yield the location of a secret or



Smash and grab While combat feels familiar, there are more tactical options. Save certain goons until last, so you can interrogate them.

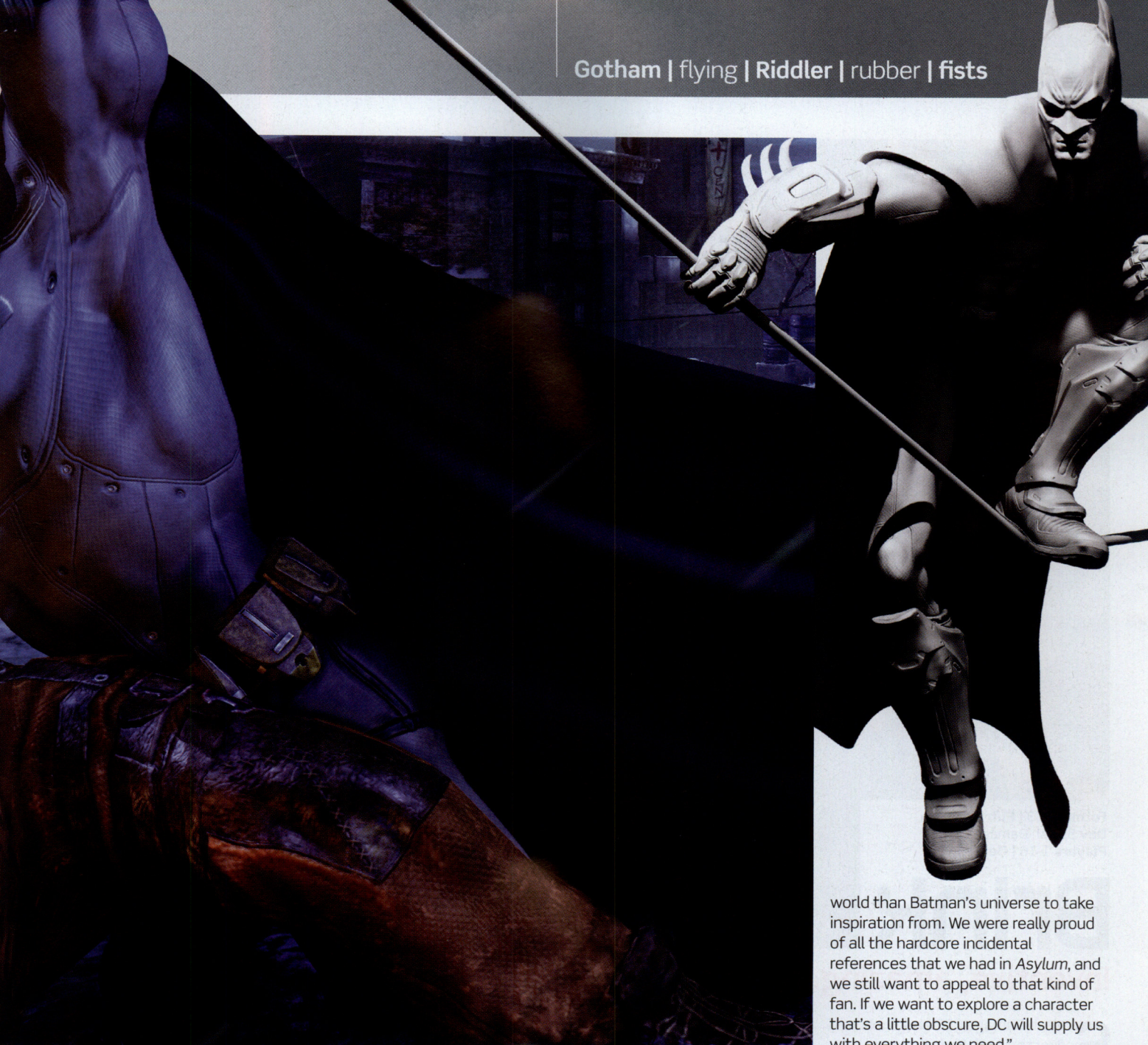


Mr lava man This *Terminator 2*-style foundry is home to a major story mission.

garner unique dialogue from characters such as TV reporter Jack Ryder (also known as the villainous Creeper), but it's all optional.

"If you're flying down a street and you don't save one of these guys the first time, they'll still be there later. But the whole game world is changing all the time. Remember the Poison Ivy stuff in *Arkham Asylum* and the way it





world than Batman's universe to take inspiration from. We were really proud of all the hardcore incidental references that we had in *Asylum*, and we still want to appeal to that kind of fan. If we want to explore a character that's a little obscure, DC will supply us with everything we need."

Mad world

It's a huge undertaking. "We have 97 people on the team, compared to 65 on the first game," says Ginn. "Because we've decided to make such a large world we had to bring in more artists, animators and so on. It's been a pretty huge technical and creative undertaking for the team."

This feels like the game *Rocksteady* always wanted to make, and their confidence shows. After the briefest of snippets we can confirm it's not just bravado: the sequel hits new heights, despite the weight of expectation.

changed the environment? There's a similar dynamic here. The turf war erupting on the streets between the

another layer to the side mission – if you leave him until last, you'll be able to grab and interrogate him, revealing the

"It's been a pretty huge technical and creative undertaking for us"

various factions might alter entire districts, and that'll affect which side-missions are available."

During one attempt to rescue a security guard from a mob of hoodlums, Batman's detective vision automatically scans one of their faces. This identifies him as a henchman of The Riddler, and he glows green. It adds

location of nearby Riddler trophies on your map. This is so you don't have to waste time scouring every inch of the map, which is five times bigger than it was in the last game.

"Our objective was not to make a bigger game world just for the sake of it," Ginn reassures us. "We want to fill it with content, and there's no better

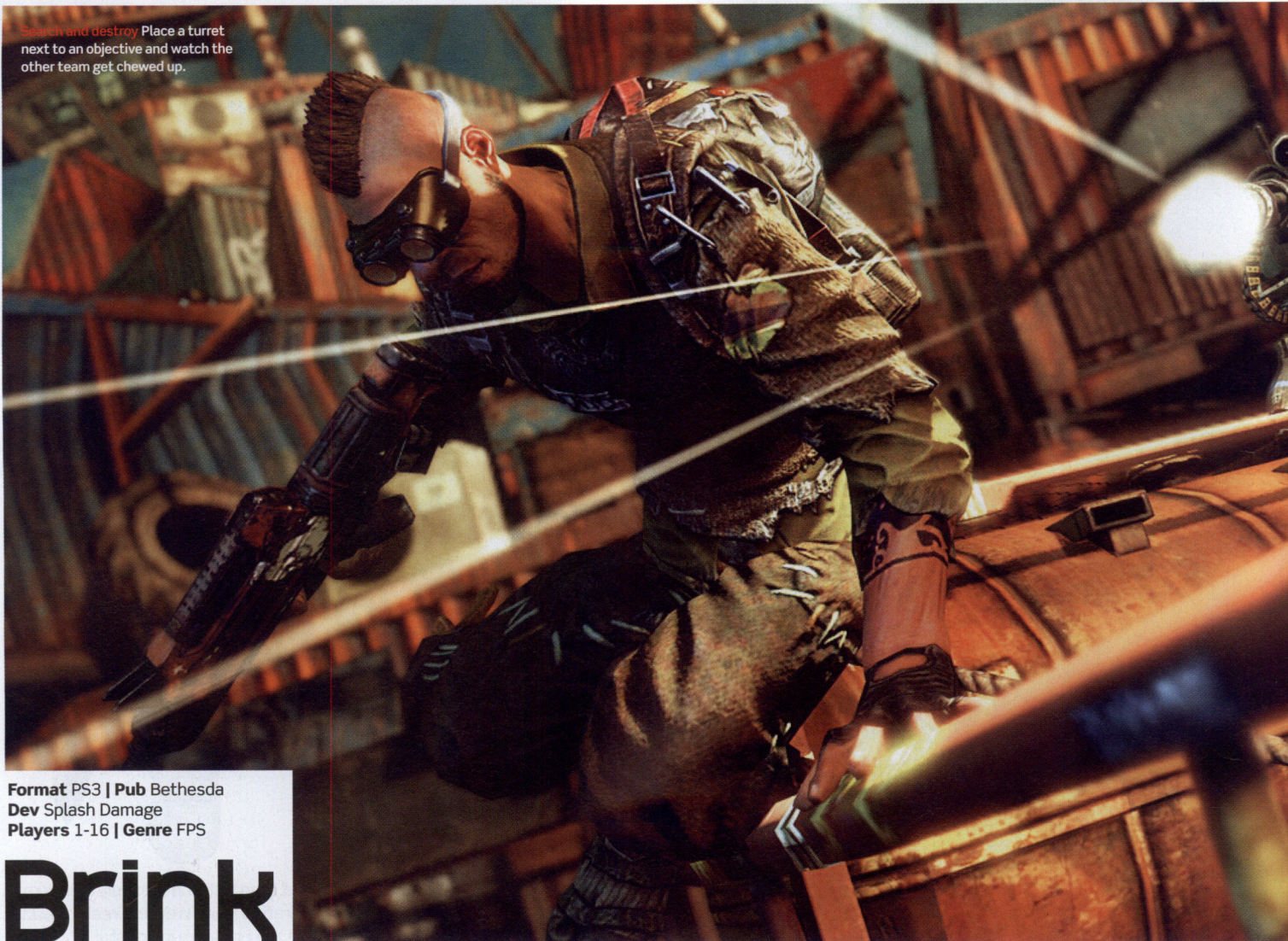


PSM3 Reckons

Bigger, more polished and fuller than the first great game, this is one of the most gorgeous, enticing worlds on PS3.



Search and destroy Place a turret next to an objective and watch the other team get chewed up.



Format PS3 | **Pub** Bethesda
Dev Splash Damage
Players 1-16 | **Genre** FPS

Brink

Inventive, amazing... but not CoD. Can *Brink* compete? Andy Kelly

Splash Damage CEO and *Brink* director, Paul Wedgwood, is crouching behind us, squirming. Nothing weird – we're blasting through the latest build of *Brink*. It's a multiplayer co-op match against a group of fiendishly intelligent AI bots, and we're... confused. *Brink* has a lot going on. Imagine someone tossing you a textbook and shouting "LEARN PHYSICS, RIGHT NOW!"

It's not really that complex, of course. It just feels like it. We're used to simple objectives in online shooters: 'Destroy the Thing' or 'Capture the Other Thing'. In *Brink* there are multiple objectives, unique to each class. We're utterly bewildered by the volume of stuff to do, and Wedgwood knows it.

We spend our first match clumsily stumbling through menus and trying to climb things we can't, but already we're wondering if, when it all clicks, we won't find a genuinely unique online shooter.

Splash Damage seem worried. Worried that critics – and players –

won't give it a chance, dismiss it for meddling with established tradition (witness the angry hijacking of *Dragon Age II*'s Metacritic score) or simply for not being *Call of Duty*.

So whenever we die, fumble the controls or mess up an objective, Wedgwood immediately explains exactly what went wrong, and how to make sure it doesn't happen again, almost apologetically.

Training day

Half an hour in and everything makes sense. We're switching classes like pros, boosting team mates' health and

ammo, nailing objectives and clambering everywhere thanks to the 'SMART' free-running ability. But that's because we have the game's *director* kneeling behind us, explaining every possible intricacy.

You won't have that luxury, and we can see *Brink* being even more overwhelming for the paying public at first – especially if you're used to the breathless arcade action of *Black Ops*, or the comparative simplicity of the objectives in *Battlefield*.

There are four classes in *Brink*: Solider, Medic, Engineer and Operative. Soldiers are the grunts, tasked with

INFLUENCES

What inspired *Brink*?



TimeSplitters



Dystopian sci-fi



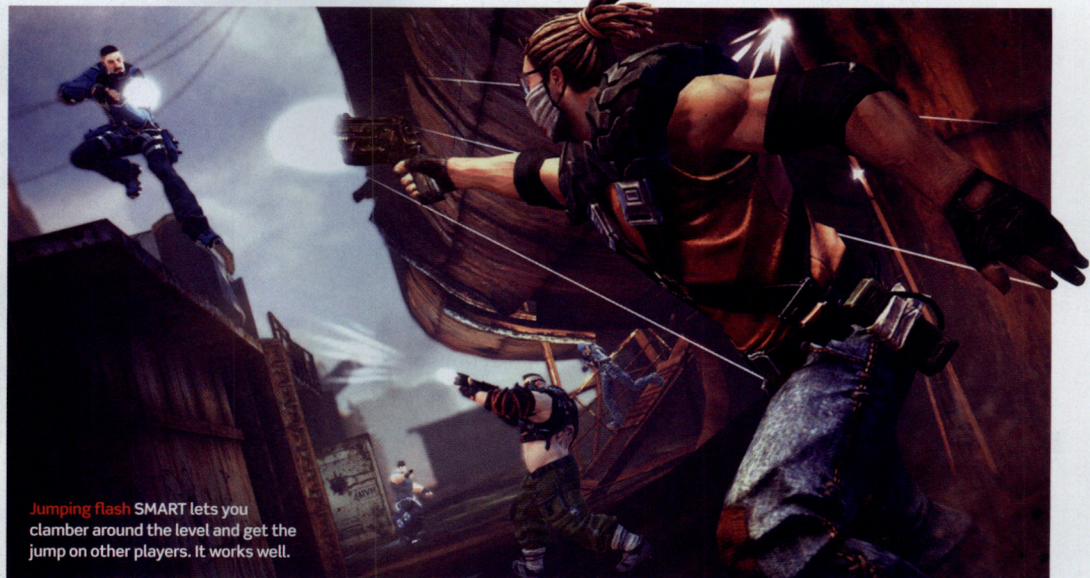
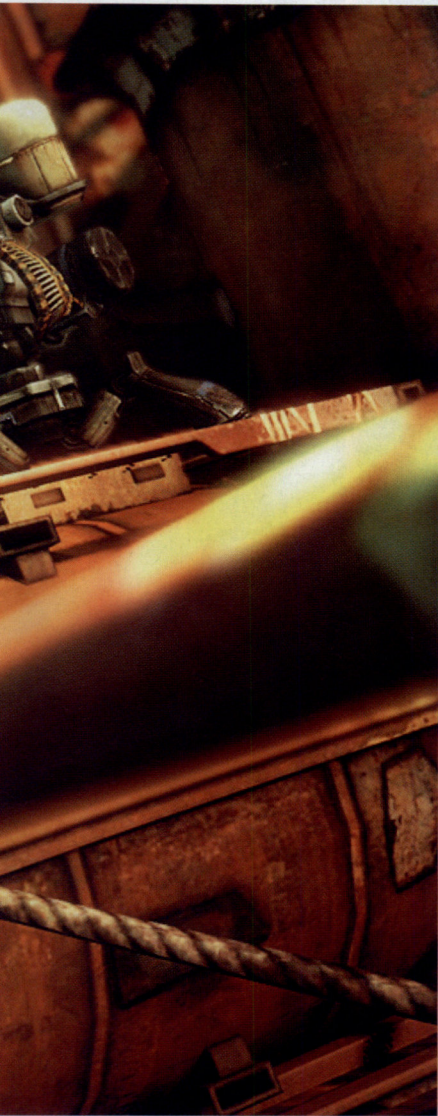
Rio's favelas



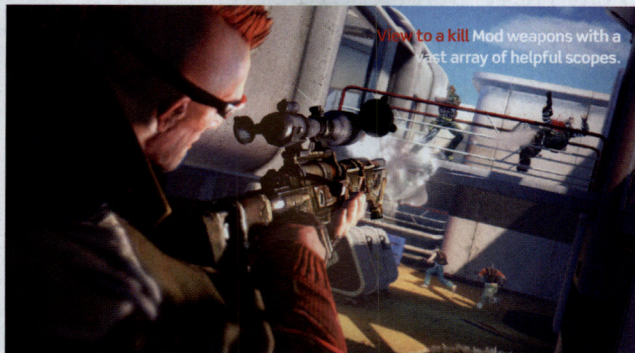
Gang warfare



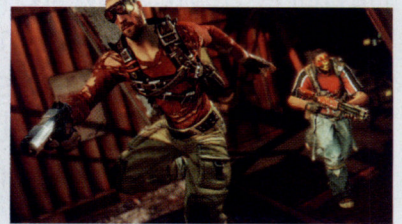
Enemy Territory



Jumping flash SMART lets you clamber around the level and get the jump on other players. It works well.



View to a kill Mod weapons with a vast array of helpful scopes.



Two tribes Two sides battle for supremacy of the huge, floating Ark: Security and Resistance.

demolishing objectives with explosives, hurling grenades and resupplying the squad with ammo. The Medic revives dead squad mates, boosts health and can even revive *himself* if he earns enough experience points.

Engineers set up turrets to defend objectives and increase the power of his squad's, and his own, weapons. Finally, the Operative can disguise himself as other players and hack enemy defences.

Whichever you choose, pulling up the objective wheel – a large radial menu that fills the screen, navigated with the right stick – reveals a variety of tasks, tailored specifically to you. When you select one (by simply letting go of the stick – it's very intuitive), the camera spins in the direction of your objective and you see its glowing outline through any scenery that's in the way.

Soldiers, for example, may have to blow open a gate to let the rest of the team through. Operatives

might covertly hack side doors to open secret paths. Engineers will repair broken down robots. Medics will need to keep a human escort target alive. All of this earns you experience points, with more being awarded for aiding the team effort. Lone wolves earn far less.

Risk-taker

At its core, *Brink* just feels good. The guns are powerful and precise; the free-running gives you incredible freedom; the visuals are bold and colourful.

The customisation is also really compelling, with a flexible character editor combining hundreds of objects to create genuine individuality. That XP unlocks more elaborate bits for your soldier too, giving you further opportunity to show off.

Will people give *Brink* the time it needs – and deserves? We hope so. A game this different deserves a chance. It's not like it's some kind of weird

art-house title, but shooters represent the most competitive genre on the market. It'll take something pretty special to drag Joe Gamer away from *CoD*. If he gives it a chance, though, he might never look back. In which case, he'll never see *Brink*'s anxious director Wedgwood squirming behind him.



PSM3 Reckons

Rocking the boat in an increasingly conservative FPS landscape could backfire – but *Brink* deserves to win big.



Format PS3 | Pub Sega | Dev Sega | Players TBC | Genre RPG action

Yakuza: Of The End

Five reasons why it's not just
'another zombie game' Daniel Robson

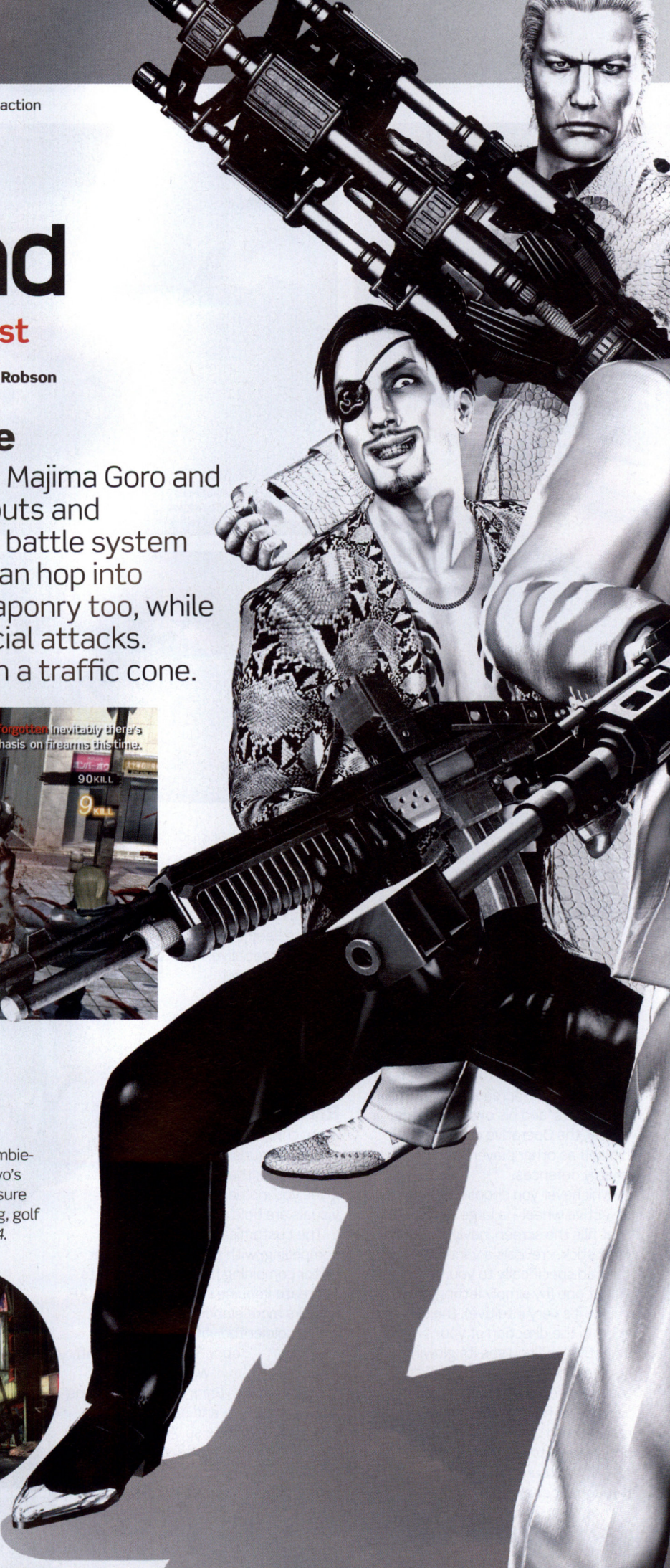
1 The combat is unique

Shun Akiyama, Kazuma Kiryu, Majima Goro and Ryuji Goda have individual loadouts and fighting styles, while an all-new battle system includes unlimited ammo. You can hop into army vehicles and use their weaponry too, while Heat Snipe moves unleash special attacks. Alternatively, beat zombies with a traffic cone.



2 It's set in Tokyo's red-light district

Burned-out shops and dilapidated neon adorn this post-zombie-apocalypse reimagining of Kamurocho, itself based on Tokyo's seedy Kabukicho district. And zombies or not, the top pleasure spots are still open for business: Pachinko, karaoke, bowling, golf and other minigames are all in and improved since *Yakuza 4*.





3 Video game honeys don't come much hotter

The girls in the hostess clubs are real: modelled on the seven winners of a babe ballot spanning Japan. You also receive missions and detailed zombie reports from researcher Reiko Hasegawa, who digs up dirt on the undead while wearing bondage gear. Classy.



Magnificent seven The dress 'em up, pimp 'em out weirdness of Hostess-ing returns. And no, you don't chat up any zombies...

4 Its zombies are famous

All walks of non-life prowl Kamurocho's decaying streets. Yakuza zombies drool blood on once-sharp suits, crying girl zombies summon backup with a pulse-quickenning sob and homeless zombies are, um, homeless. There are even celebrity zombies modelled on Japanese TV personalities, plus mutant beasts that look like *Resident Evil's* Licker on steroids.



5 The story is totally epic

Where did the zombies come from? Why is Kamurocho quarantined? Who kidnapped orphan Haruka Sawamura? And could gang war be an even bigger threat than the undead? And what's with all the hippy protesters with the 'Loving dead' placards? Expect exquisite cutscenes to explain all.



PSM3 Reckons

An odd diversion for *Yakuza*, but filled with humour and seriously cool action. Pray for an English translation...



Format PS3 | Pub Sony | Dev Sucker Punch | Players 1 | Genre Action

inFamous 2

Making choices, making trouble, making... levels?

Andy Hartup

Helping hand, or an explosive fist to our enemy's face? That's the moral quandary facing us during our latest hands on time with *inFamous 2*. Sad thing is, no matter which route we choose to grind, the end result is the same.

Let's set the scene. Our hero Cole is tasked with rescuing a prisoner from one of New Marais' criminal gangs. She's called Kuo, an FBI agent with valuable knowledge about how Cole can evolve his powers and smash his city-swallowing rival, The Beast.

Double trouble

Our companions, Zeke (from the first game) and Nix (a leather-clad, hedonistic bitch) offer differing

solutions. Nix suggests taking a tram full of explosives and driving it into Kuo's prison. That'd be the 'explosive fist approach'. Zeke, on the other hand, encourages us to free a bus-load of captured cops who can assist in storming the prison.

So what do we do? Both approaches boil down to the same outcome, and both involve plenty of scrapping and zapping. Combat feels great, with combos flowing naturally between fists and electricity. It's all smoothly done, bringing *Batman's* free-flow fighting

to mind, and it's definitely the biggest jump forward. However, the moral choices are so sign-posted it's comical, and next to *Assassin's Creed* the free-running is too restrictive.

In its favour, though, Sucker Punch have tried something genuinely brave: letting you make your own levels. Using existing maps as a template, you can create missions and challenges by placing enemies, obstacles and even tweaking Cole's abilities - for example allowing him to only attack with his melee weapon.

These levels will then appear as green icons as you play single-player, letting you jump in whenever you like - providing your PS3 is online. It's a fantastic idea.

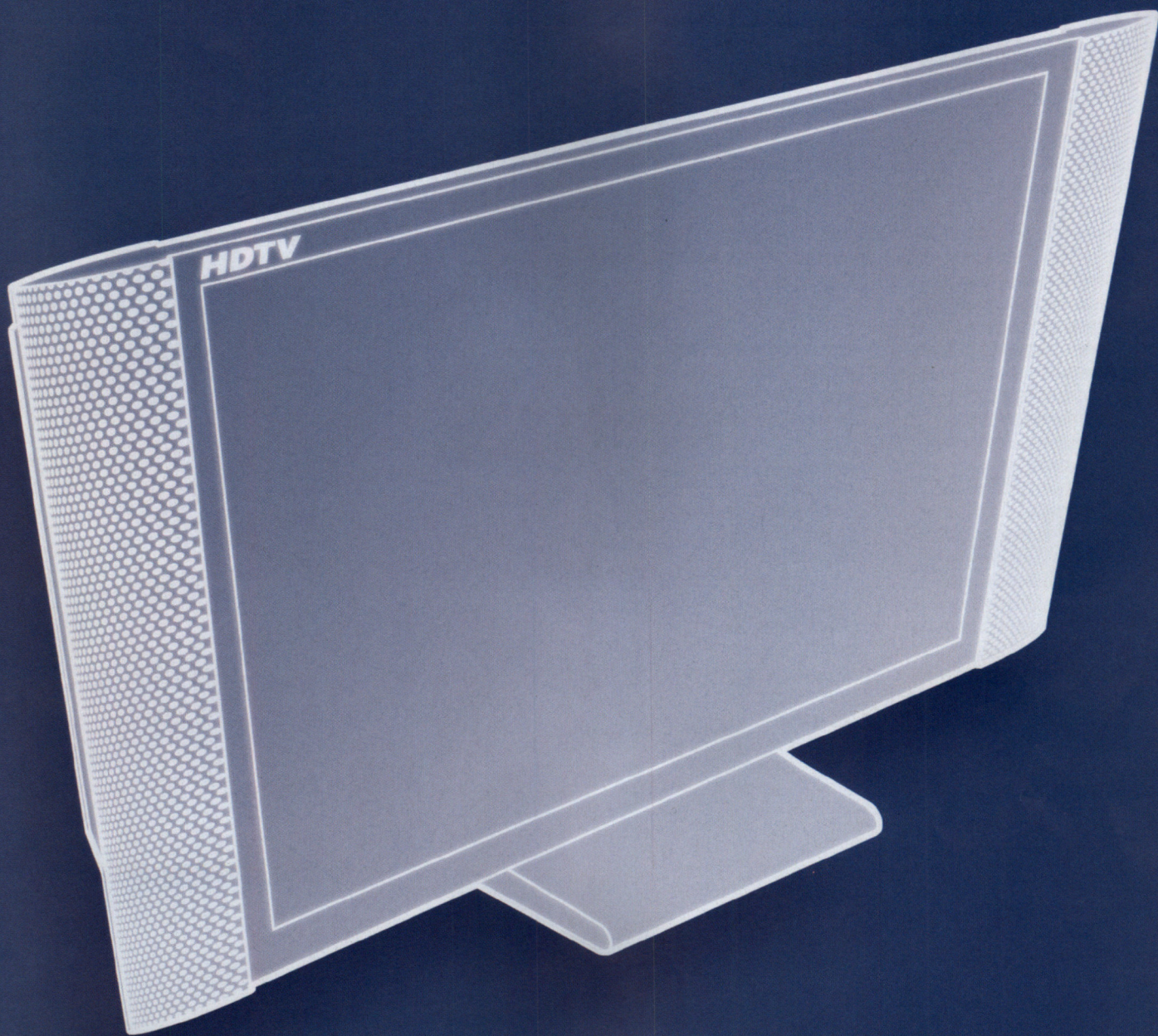
Real world New Marais offers more challenging platforming than *Empire City* thanks to its sprawling lay-out.



PSM3 Reckons

We love the improved fighting, but grinding needs work, and early impressions are that the cast is still one-dimensional.

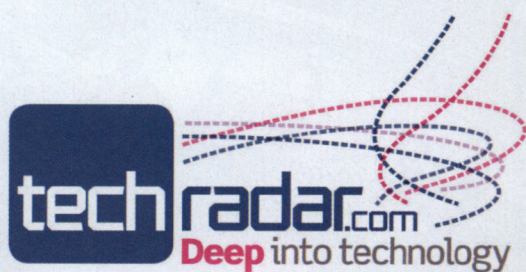




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Format PS3 | Pub EA | Dev DICE | Players 1-24 | Genre FPS

Battlefield 3

Why PS3's best-looking shooter might steal *Call Of Duty's* dog-tags **Andy Hartup**

We've learnt a lot over the last couple of years," explains *Battlefield 3* Executive Producer, Patrick Bach, speaking exclusively to PSM3. "We now have both the tools, with Frostbite 2 (their new graphics engine) and the knowledge to build something truly great". It's a bold claim, but on the evidence of our brief but thrilling in-game demo, Swedish developers DICE might be crafting the best modern war shooter, not just of 2011, but of this generation.

So far, PS3 has only been given a taste of what DICE is capable of. *Battlefield Bad Company 2*, arguably the console's best multiplayer shooter, is their finest work and they also contributed to the online element (or what we refer to as 'the good bit') of the recent *Medal Of Honor* remake. *Mirror's Edge* was theirs too, although something of a departure for the studio now synonymous with war.

Battlefield 3, though, is different. It's the first main-series game on next-gen, coming five years after

Battlefield 2, it's powered by an engine that has been three years in the making (Frostbite 2), and the team working on it is twice the size of that committed to *Bad Company 2*. The end result is... well, just look at it.

Solo skills

Anyone who has picked up a *Battlefield* game on PS3 will already know that multiplayer is king, but this time around DICE are aiming to bring the traditionally good-but-not-brilliant solo experience up to standard. "Our goal is to take what *Battlefield* stands for in multiplayer - both huge and tight battles, vehicle and infantry warfare, destruction and play style variation - and transform this into a single-player experience," says Bach. This means getting serious.



Work together DICE are looking to bring the squad dynamics of multiplayer to the main campaign.



**"PS3 has only had
a taste of what
Battlefield devs DICE
are capable of"**



Down time DICE are looking to smartly pace their campaign. This should ensure players won't get battle-fatigue, but at the same time, don't expect to be idle for too long...



Man down Get incapacitated by an enemy and you can be dragged to cover and healed by a medic.

The comedy and OTT scenarios from *Bad Company* have been ditched – now you're fighting serious battles in real-world locations all over the globe. Tehran, Paris, New York are all confirmed locations.

New York? Again? Really? Hasn't that been done to death? Surely *Crysis 2* is the last word on the Big Apple? Well, yes, New York is a popular destination for the trigger happy, but the prospect of taking the Frostbite 2 engine there sends a tingle down our spine. DICE are promising huge set-pieces with incredible destruction courtesy of their new engine, and New York's wealth of skyscrapers is a perfect showcase for what it can do. Based on what we've seen so far, even *Crysis 2*'s incredible visuals might look pedestrian compared to *Battlefield 3*'s New York.

It's not just about the looks, though. DICE recognise the need to ease off on the SFX every now and then to give players a breather. "Adding drama and a varied flow through the campaign is always key to not make it just a shooting gallery," recognises Bach, subtly poking fun at *Call Of Duty*'s relentlessly paced campaign. He has a point. *Black Ops* moved too fast for most, taking little time to contextualise its plot, leading many to criticise the single-player. It's clearly one of the 'knowledge lessons' Bach is referencing at the start of our interview, and one that will – hopefully – make big moments, like the planned earthquake during one level (really), stand out.

Squad damage

As for multiplayer? DICE are keeping quiet for now; understandable, as this

EVOLUTION Battlefield series



Battlefield 1942 PC 2002

The first BF game, its open maps were revolutionary in multiplayer gaming.



Battlefield Vietnam PC 2004

Not to be confused with the recent add-on pack for *Bad Company 2*.



Battlefield 2 PC 2005

The first modern warfare *Battlefield* featured the ability to record matches.



Battlefield BC 2 PS3 2010

The latest, and one of the best multiplayer experiences on PS3.



will be their trump card. Bach is coy when asked about it, reeling out a stock answer that hints at the 'if it ain't broke...' approach: "We are always learning and developing, and there are plenty of things we have learnt over the years. The biggest lesson learned is how well the core concept behind *Battlefield* works when executed right". Reading between the lines, that means more of the same sandbox multiplayer, but with even better tools. So, expect the likes of *Rush* and *Conquest* to make a comeback, probably accompanied by a new mode

born from the devs experiences making *Medal Of Honor* online.

We doubt anyone would complain if the core multiplayer concept was largely copied over from *Bad Company 2* into *Battlefield 3* – a year after release it's still filling servers and delighting an ever growing fan-base. What will ring the biggest changes in how we play *Battlefield* online is, again, the technology. Frostbite 2 offers incredible possibilities for destruction, allowing players to smash the entire level apart in a way that even *Red Faction* would be envious of.

"Even *Crysis 2*'s incredible visuals look pedestrian compared to what we've seen in *Battlefield 3*"



Fire in the hole This is the kind of destruction Frostbite 2 is capable of. Now imagine this in New York. Oh yes.



Knock knock Soldier animations are a big focus here too, with DICE sharing EA Sports' technology.

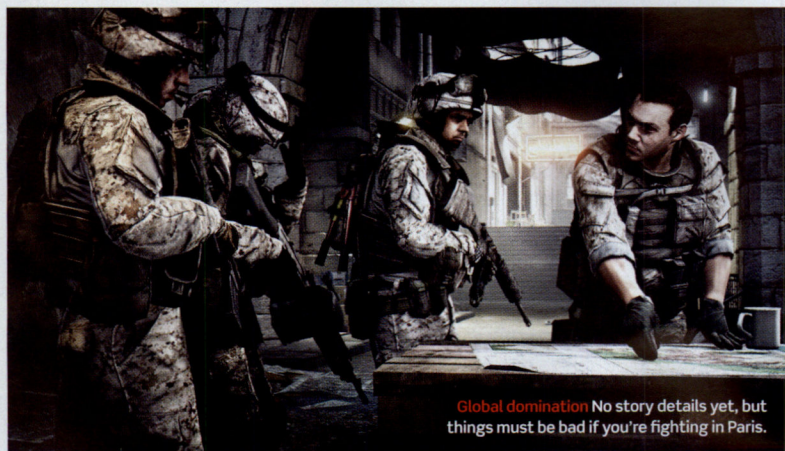


Grounded You'll be able to go prone in *Battlefield 3*, but don't expect to be able to camp out for kills.

allies to cover before reviving them, while the fallen player can provide a certain amount of cover using a pistol. It's a small change, but one that makes the basic multiplayer dynamics that much more interesting.

Similarly, DICE are looking to improve spotting. For those who don't know, *Battlefield* multiplayer is heavily team-skewed, so it's as much about communicating with your allies as shooting your enemies. Spotting is where you line up an enemy in your cross-hairs and hit  to 'tag' them for your whole team. Now everyone will see that enemy because a red triangle appears over their head for a few seconds – handy if they duck behind cover or go out of the effective range of your current weapon. In *Battlefield 3* the team are looking at creating a way of spotting that not only shows position, but distance too – essentially a 3D marker. Again, a tiny improvement that could make a huge difference.

Expect more improvements, small and significant, to make themselves known as we approach launch, this November. EA have promised a multiplayer Beta too – likely to hit around summer – which you'll already be enlisted for if you bought the *Medal Of Honor* special edition. For now, we're left with more questions than answers, but DICE seem to know exactly what they're doing with *Battlefield 3*. The PS3 version might be a 'scaled down' version of early PC footage (but still 'amazing'), suggest DICE, but its threat to *Call of Duty* has never been larger.



Global domination No story details yet, but things must be bad if you're fighting in Paris.

QUOTE

Developer insight

"There are so many things we can do [with Frostbite 2] that we could not get even close to before. There is a super-complex streaming system that allows us to create more detailed and realistic environments. The animation system is also something that will blow people away too."



Patrick Bach
Executive Producer

Meanwhile, troops are now animated by EA's ANT engine, used in the company's incredible-looking sports titles, to give each fight an extra layer of realism. This leap in tech has now allowed the devs to introduce the prone stance in multiplayer without compromising or unbalancing the core gameplay. How? No-one likes a camper in *COD*, lying in the dark corner of a room, covering the only entrance. Try

that in *Battlefield 3* and you'll get a short, sharp RPG coming through the wall. No more cover, no more camping.

Sweet moves

The ANT tech is also powering a significant but sensible change to the medic class (all four classes are making a comeback, although there will be alterations to the way they're loaded out). Now medics can drag downed



PSM3 Reckons

Multiplayer brilliance is guaranteed. If the single-player delivers on its promises this might be the shooter of 2011.



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Cole in one Would you beat
inFamous twice for rewards?

"Why should I be forced to play through twice to get Platinum?"



I've just had an interesting chat with a few of my pupils about moral choices in video games. I asked them whether you should have to play through a game twice to achieve a Platinum Trophy when making moral choices. Of course there is value replaying games, but surely you would agree that the power of making moral choices during your first play through are lost if the choices you make do not allow you to achieve what many see as the ultimate reward: Platinum. Usually the moral choices you make

follow the ethical argument about how the game character values individual life. If you take *inFamous* as an example, specifically when Cole must choose between saving his girlfriend, who is a doctor, or five of her colleagues. Replaying this dilemma to achieve both Trophies diminishes the realism of the story.

It also shows a lack of consideration for gamers who invest their own morality into games to be told that they must take the alternative path to achieve a Platinum Trophy by replaying the game. Choosing the alternative decisions in your second play-through

spoils the gaming experience, because the reward system fails to value gamers who want to stand by their decisions to be a good or evil.

Gary Walker, email

Good point. On the one hand, different Trophies for opposing moral choices does encourage you to go back and see parts of the game that you missed during your first play. On the other, it can be frustrating for games like *Heavy Rain* where you're forced to replay scenes in a way that doesn't come naturally, just to get specific Trophies. What do you prefer? Let us know on the usual address.

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

Why has *Crash Bandicoot* never been remade in HD?
Hutchis1337
The HD remake

treatment tends to be saved for special games that don't really show their age.
Crash doesn't fall

into that bracket. I have heard that each DCUO disc is somehow locked to the first PS3 it is

used on. Is there any truth to this?
Dookiediallo
Not true, although if you buy a second

hand copy you need to also buy a new activation key. Don't worry, that's only the same as signing up

for your subscription. I realised the other day that no console does weather better than PS3. Think



Hack off We've had loads of letters berating *Call Of Duty* cheats.

Ban the cheats

Enough is enough. I'm sick of these cheating douchebags ruining *Modern Warfare 2*. I'm talking about the smug losers who've got hacked cheat menus allowing them to become invincible, shoot people (me!) from anywhere on the map and now even wipe my freakin' attachments and perks!

I'd previously only seen it a couple of times since the game came out but this past couple of weeks I'm struggling to find a game without one. I thought I hated nuke boosters, but at least you could stick a semtex to their heads and make yourself feel better – these chumps are something else. So I've been brainstorming for solutions to this syphilitic plague. Obviously my first thought was to have them burned but for all Sony's future-proofing of their console I doubt they included a PSN-triggered incendiary device. Seems a shame.

Plan B: take away the benefit - lock their profiles



A bit Cliffy Devs are looking at how to combat hackers in their upcoming games.

about it: *Uncharted 2* (snow) *Heavy Rain* (rain) and *Killzone 2* (lightning).
Mac Spain

Good observation. Expect more awesome weather in *Uncharted 3* too, meteorology fans.

This *Dead Island* game: excellent trailer, but I swear it was originally announced in 2007

so where has it been these past 4 years?
Branagh Crealock
On a tropical holiday. How about a retro

review of *Shadow of Memories*? That was a cool game about time travel.
Kevin Darby Yes, it

would make a good Retro review...

PSNMail

Mail us at psm3

Keeping cool

Over the past few months I have been weighing up whether or not to buy a cooling stand for my PS3 slim, but still have come to no decision. Help.

Clint Tokley, email
You don't need one unless your PS3 is near a radiator or a load of other big electrical items. The Slim rarely over-heats.

so they can't rank up and they can't unlock anything. Also anyone tagged as a cheater should be exclusively put in games together so they can play round after futile round where none of them can die, no matter how many unlimited air drops they can call in. No doubt there'll be a technical barrier of the network spotting who these people are compared to normal human beings but that's not my business - I'm not the 'how guy'...

All I can say is that I hate them. They've ruined my favourite game of all time. Call me old fashioned but I can't help feeling that these people are a true waste of oxygen.

Joe Wyatt, email

While we agree with your sentiments, Joe, your methods might be a bit extreme. Sony has issued a statement saying: "By identifying PlayStation 3 systems that breach our guidelines and terminating their ability to connect to PlayStation Network, we are protecting our business and preserving the honest gameplay experiences that you expect and deserve," via the PlayStation Blog. Clearly PSN bans are the best short-term solution. Looking further ahead, rumours suggest Sony is working on a new version of PS3 that can't be hacked using current methods. Games devs too, are looking to tighten security, as Epic and People Can Fly reveal in our *Bulletstorm* interview on p18. Hackers can ruin a game via multiplayer exploits and that may mean less people buy it.

Get creative

In music terms, gaming is the indie genre at the heights of its Britpop stage; huge levels of public success, but with unrealistically massive expectations for every subsequent band signed that said populism entails. The *COD*'s, *FIFA*'s and the *GTA*'s might have the critical and financial momentum to drive gaming to the popular media, but in its wake leaves publishers demanding similar returns for every title released, not allowing for the fact that the bigger games are the exceptional sellers, not the norm'.

Consequently, we're left with heavy investment in generic pastiches of existing franchises (*Medal of Honor* – a steady glut of the familiar, solid and unexceptional – and marketing budget starvation for smaller games, sent out to die by disinterested publishers (*Mirror's Edge*, *Blur* etc). Or, as we've seen in now departed *Guitar Hero*'s case, brands run into the ground with game after game that should have been DLC, rather than physical releases. There simply aren't enough gamers to sustain a consistently saturated market.

And of the future? I've no idea. All I do know is that as creativity and risk-taking suffer so too do the jobs of the developers and ultimately, choice for the gamers. We gamers vote with our wallets and I vote for variety, not bland uniformity. Who's with me?

Miles Hamer, email

Nicely put. PSM3 has seen sales figures for some of last year's PS3 games, and there's a huge gap between the winners and the losers. If you want great, original games, you really do have to support the devs who dare to try and deliver.

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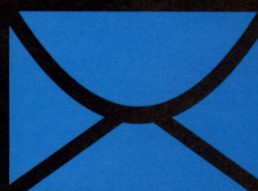
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Words: Lucy O'Brien

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Your journey has taken you through the galaxy. You've lost friends, you've made enemies. You've fallen in and out of love. You've made it through unimaginable odds. **And it's all lead to this...** ➤



W

e've had the worst winter ever", says a particularly forthcoming employee of the hotel we're staying at in Edmonton. "It's March. It's not meant to be negative fifteen outside". Her eyes dart wildly to the window, and we get the impression it's been worse than we could possibly imagine, us fortunate lot from warmer climates.

Blanketed in snow, Edmonton does feel otherworldly. One of Canada's most northern cities, its notoriously bitter winters give it an air of remoteness and, dare we say, abandonment; even its biggest attraction, the West Edmonton Mall, feels inexplicably stuck in the 80s.

It's the perfect place for a world-class company like BioWare to have its headquarters. In a maze-like building seemingly designed to confuse outsiders, employees sit in dark rooms, huddled over cozy monitors. They're probably indifferent to long hours; it's warm in here.

PSM3 is here, of course, to see *Mass Effect 3*. And although we feel like befuddled intruders in the womb-like workspace, Executive Producer Casey Hudson's opening presentation is so teasing that our fanaticism - born of hundreds of hours of planet scanning - is quick to rear its head. Trepidation be damned.

City on fire

"Looking back on the two previous games, it was all about personal sacrifices," says Hudson. '*Mass Effect 2* was about the larger idea, larger sacrifices. Your entire crew gets captured; you're trying to save a lot more people. With the third one the scale continues to increase. It's on the scale of entire civilizations."

The 'scale' generalization is used a lot during our visit, but BioWare is universally - painfully - guarded in offering us headline material. While we probe incessantly, the studio is keeping mum on specific story details beyond the game's beginnings. We can only assume they've signed contracts with their own blood.

"Oh man, I'm probably going to get in trouble for this," says Cinematics Director Parrish Ley, casting a furtive glance at a lingering EA representative. "In *Mass Effect 3*, it's more about the burden of leadership. It's not about Shepard being part of a team anymore; we're trying to isolate him. We actually have him have to take a step back. That's where he has to be, as the leader. Isolated. Everything falls on his shoulders."

'The burden of leadership' is an appropriate theme for the highly anticipated finale of BioWare's sci-fi epic. The events that will unfold will be the culmination of every plot strand in the first two games, played out against a backdrop of chaos. Beginning with a Reaper attack on Earth, *Earthbound* Shepard will hit the ground running. "In *Mass Effect 3*, all the things you've heard are coming, come at the beginning of the game," confirms Hudson. "And so Shepard is literally just trying to stay alive, and these massive creatures are walking around. It's a galaxy at war from the start."

Combat Ready

BioWare has already proved to be an intrepid studio, fearlessly overhauling flawed practices while putting huge amounts of trust in the voice of its fans. So while it would be easy to rest

SIDE-QUESTING Scanning: Axed?

"With ME1 we did the uncharted worlds and vehicle, and then in ME2 we made them more polished," says Casey Hudson. "In ME3 that aspect of the experience, we'll always deliver. But we're going to do something different. It won't be planet scanning. It won't be vehicles. But there will still be exploration."



Old friends Remember how Shepard used to work for Cerberus? Not anymore.

Stay frosty Enemies are much more dexterous in ME3.

on the laurels of *Mass Effect 2*'s success, it's not in the studio's nature. While BioWare continues to strengthen RPG elements in *Mass Effect 3* with customizable weapons and broader skill trees, the studio is out to be the master of all its domains with its finale. "We brought things forward a lot from one to two," continues Hudson. "But then it's another huge step to really complete that evolution. In terms of combat, the first game was very rules-oriented and old-fashioned. We tried to narrow in with that sense of precision style combat in *Mass Effect 2*. In *Mass Effect 3*, we're trying to compete with world-

"THE SCALE CONTINUES TO INCREASE. IT'S NOW ON THE SCALE OF CIVILIZATIONS"

class shooter style combat".

It's an ambition reflected in the header 'Veteran Is The New Normal', one of BioWare's major development pillars. So how does *Mass Effect 3* intend to flex its muscles? "We've done a whole bunch of things to make the enemies better," says Hudson. "We're creating characters that fill very different kinds of roles in combat, like chess pieces."

Mass Effect 3's new enemies certainly look formidable. BioWare have been quick to rectify the anonymity of the previous games' AI with Grand Guignol-esque creatures, designed to provoke a more visceral response from the player. "The reapers play a huge

Quick-witted customizable weapons will make for explosive combat



**“THE CLOSEST
THING WE HAVE
FOR A REFERENCE
IS WORLD WAR II”**



Boom boom pow “you call that a gun? THIS is a gun!”



Bigger is better “Hulk Smash! Oh wait. Is that phrase copyrighted?”

role in *Mass Effect 3*, says Senior Artist Rion Swanson, flashing some gory concept art. “There is no such thing as a human-sized reaper, but they’ve indoctrinated other races. So what you see here is a lot of rotting flesh plus the reaper technology.”

“In some instances we’re putting Shepard in the same space as the reapers,” Hudson adds. “Even though they’re absolutely enormous.”

Fortunately, Shepard too is endowed with a new dexterity. Able to jump (contextually), climb ladders, dive, roll and leap over cover, he can now fight in a three-dimensional

battlefield. “Shepard’s a lot more mobile,” explains designer Cory Gaspar as he takes us through a short slice of gameplay. He rolls Shepard to cover as a throng of enemies attack. “And uh, enemies are quite aggressive”, he laughs, as the AI – who are equally as mobile – relentlessly close in.

All Heart

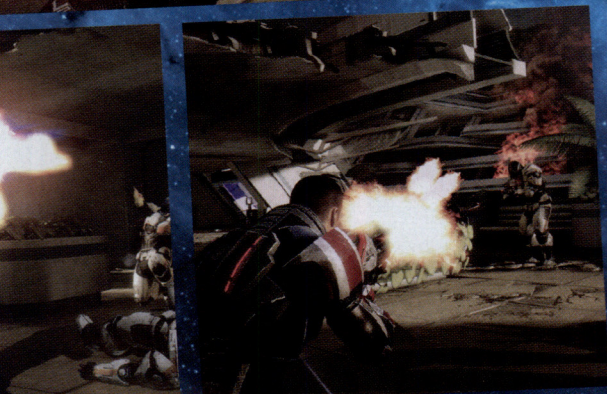
It’s an appropriate upgrade for what is promising to be a fight of epic proportions. *Mass Effect 2* was merely an exercise in prepping us for battle; *Mass Effect 3* is where the war really

begins. “Scale is woven into the whole fabric of everything that we’re doing,” says Hudson. “The closest thing we have for a reference is World War II. You’re going to see the destruction. You’re going to see the evidence of that war everywhere you go.”

There’s that word again. While we’re suitably impressed by BioWare’s lofty promises, we can’t help but worry if some of the intimacy might be swallowed by spectacle. *Mass Effect*’s success can be attributed to many things, but its masterstroke has always been its beautifully fleshed-out characters and a morality system



Bananarama "They call us B1 & B2.
With guns."

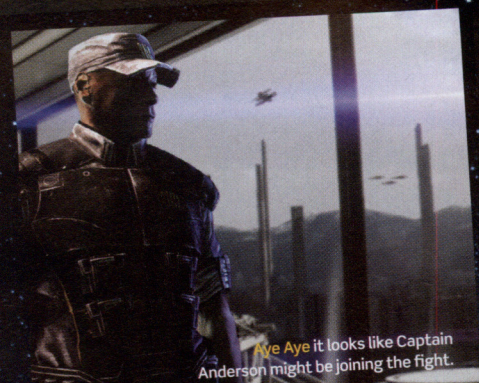


ROLL-CALL

Who's returning for the final fight?

- Ashley** » Confirmed as a squadmate
- Kaiden** » Confirmed as a squadmate
- Liara** » Confirmed as a squadmate
- Garrus** » Confirmed as a squadmate
- James Sanders** » Confirmed as a new squadmate





Aye Aye it looks like Captain Anderson might be joining the fight.

that commands genuine empathy. Hasn't *Mass Effect*'s heart and soul always been just that - its heart and soul?

Huge moments only mean anything to the player if you tie in relationships, responds Ley. "If you understand that your friend is leading a group of troops and that group is slaughtered - it suddenly means something. It makes a sequence work. When we started, we charted the whole thing, and made sure we were balancing the personal elements in with the epic ones. We wanted to make sure the balance was right from the get-go. Otherwise, it's not *Mass Effect*."

Hudson hopes that *Mass Effect 3* will continue to challenge players to question their own values. "What's interesting to me is when there are different sacrifices to be made, and there are no right or wrong answers. So that's what we're always driving towards - giving Shepard this choice. Either this thing will be sacrificed, or that thing. Maybe there's a way you can save them both. But the agonising choice is what we try to find."

You sadists, we joke. "An easy choice is a non-choice, really," smiles Hudson. "That's why we do it."

Time Flies

Mass Effect 3 will be, at the very least, a showcase for a studio at the



Bye bye "really? That's how you're defending yourself? Really?"

"THE AGONISING CHOICE IS SOMETHING WE TRY TO FIND"

height of its powers. Our lasting impression was of synchronicity, a singular language and vision. "Really, the writers and myself, we've been working on this franchise for nearly five years now," says Ley. "So we know all the characters and different variables, so much of it is in our head. I'd hate to see someone come onto this game cold."

As we leave Edmonton a day later, it begins to snow heavily. The roads are covered in ice and cars are upturned on the road. Weather reporters say 'it hasn't been this bad in a long time'. But as the storm whips on outside, things keep ticking along in warm, dark rooms at BioWare. They are working on their masterpiece, after all. **PSM3**

UP YOUR ARSENAL BioWare's new approach to gunplay

Mass Effect 3 will introduce a workbench system where you can modify your weapons with a variety of different parts, changing their stats and appearance. Casey Hudson explains how BioWare are taking a new approach to class-based warfare. "In the first game, we had a strict class-based approach. In *Mass Effect 2* we opened that up. Now your class determines how many different categories of weapons you can carry. So a soldier can still carry all kinds of weapons. But it might not make sense for an engineer to run around with a whole arsenal, but he can choose. We're really broadening out the ability for all players to be able to enjoy the absolute maximum of shooter combat."



Boo! ME3's husks are tougher, but you can dismember them.



INTERVIEW WITH CASEY HUDSON

PSM3 sits down with Mass Effect 3's Executive Producer

Casey Hudson has worked in videogames for over a decade. He worked as a technical artist on MDK2 (2000) and Neverwinter Nights (2002) before moving to Project Director on Knights of the Old Republic (2003). He worked as Project Director on Mass Effect (2007) and Mass Effect 2 (2010), and is now Executive Producer on Mass Effect 3.

PSM3: There's a lot of focus on player choice and morality throughout the Mass Effect series. For people who played through as a renegade, are they able to redeem themselves? How set in stone is their path now?

Hudson: Their choices will carry through, but not to the point where you're not able to return and come to the other side. It was a similar thing that we had to think about in ME2 - there's some pretty complicated math modeling behind how you bring in your paragon and renegade status from the first game. How does that map over to a starting amount, and how is that displayed so mentally it feels like it's different enough, but you can see progress in your actions? One problem is, if you're making a bunch of choices, and you don't see a lot of movement there, you might feel like it's not working. There's a lot of thought that goes into how we balance it, how we show it. Of course there's value in continuing to play in a certain way, but there's also the ability to come back.

PSM3: A lot of games are taking their cues from Mass Effect. Do you see this kind of morality system as the future of storytelling in games?

Hudson: I do think it will be part of the future of games. There are great reasons why we want to do it, why it has to happen. I think one rule of interactive entertainment is: any part of the experience that isn't interactive doesn't matter to the experience. That's one of the challenges with cut-scenes - there are certain things you want to show, but moving the camera away from the player means they lose control. Even more so, in a story, if you have a character that you want the player to identify with - unless you had an interaction that lead to you caring about that character, you won't. There's no way for us in an interactive medium, to say - 'you care

about this character'. It's different to a movie, which is all about empathy. You see a guy walking a dog, and the dog gets hurt, you feel sorry for him. But in a game, if someone says 'this is your dog and you have to care about it,' you're just going to say 'that's not my dog!' So you have to have some interaction to develop a bond. Interactivity implies choice. Interactivity that doesn't allow you to do anything different isn't real interactivity.

PSM3: Have you been surprised at the levels of attachment players have to some of the characters in the series?

Hudson: Part of the problem when we began the original Mass Effect, was that the Xbox 360 wasn't out yet, but we knew it was coming, we just didn't know its capabilities. Was it going to be photo-real? We were shooting for the moon, as we had to create these digital actors. But we couldn't visualize how we could create alien characters that could act with the emotion of a human being. So we intentionally didn't put a lot of emotional storytelling on the aliens. But people developed bonds with characters like Garrus, for example. And they wanted romances with some of our alien characters. I mean, you could see why - Garrus has this cool attitude, and has neat mannerisms, and is handsome in a kind of exoskeleton way. So then we intentionally built in a romance with Garrus and we introduced Thane - who is the male equivalent of Liara - he was made to be a romance character. But we would never have known we could have done that originally. That's part of trying to understand what fans are interested in and building those things into our story.



WELCOME TO STEELPORT. IT COULD BE ANY CITY.

PSM3
Exclusive

Unrivalled studio
access and new info

**IT COULD
BE ANY DAY.
AND, LIKE
USUAL...**



You're in a bikini on fire and dodging an exploding cop car. Typical.

Meet *Saints Row: The Third* – the open-world action epic where all bets are off...

You're right, *Saints Row: The Third* is childish. Not that you'd want your kids behaving like this: it's a game where you punch grandpas and grannies, run around in the nude and smash people's faces with a giant, floppy purple dick on a stick. It's wilfully, gleefully OTT; utterly crass and irresistible – and in a world of grimly realistic shooters and tortured anti-heroes, that's pretty refreshing.

Sure, the original Xbox-only *Saints Row* was a shameless *GTA: San Andreas* clone – and plagued by technical gripes – but by embracing its childish imagination, *Saints Row 2* was stuffed with ideas, most of them entertaining, at a time when



Saints Row: The Third





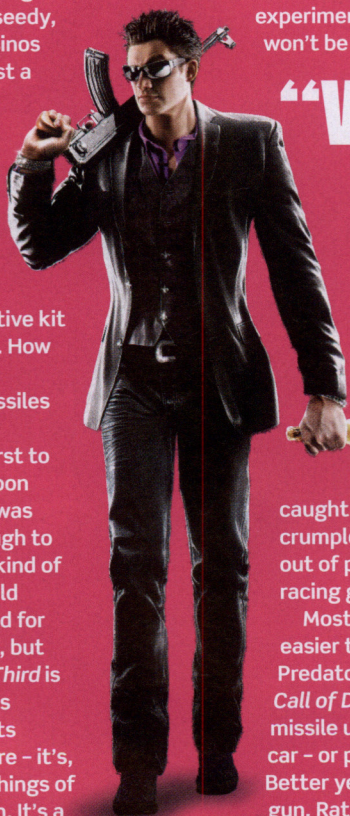
Sensible runaround The handling is more car than toy car this time.

Grand Theft Auto's top priorities were grittiness, satire and atmosphere. We love GTA, but surely there's room for lightness and darkness in the open-world genre?

Sexy makeover

It helps that *Saints Row: The Third* at least looks grown up. The distinctly last-gen visuals haunting *Saints Row 2* have been swapped for glistening new technology, and it's a leap forward from Volition's recent *Red Faction Guerilla*, let alone the series' last outing. The glistening new city of Steelport is densely decorated: wander into the Let's Pretend store to pick up a purple spacesuit (as you will) and you find a room crammed with incidental details. The streets are similarly gorgeous, with the bland shades of Stilwater replaced by bright, vibrant tones. It looks particularly arresting as the sun sets and the seedy, neon-adorned casinos light up. It's almost a shame you're going to make an enormous mess of it.

It won't take you long, either. Volition is giving you seriously destructive kit early in the game. How about a laser designator for missiles that don't even impact, but airburst to rain fiery doom upon whatever target was unfortunate enough to be painted? This kind of military tech would ordinarily be saved for special occasions, but *Saints Row: The Third* is so confident it has enough arms up its sleeves – as it were – it's, uh, handing out things of this scale early on. It's a



game that forces you to have fun.

To meet the threat to civilised society your tool-up sociopath poses, Volition has 'roided up the cops over the last game. Initially you'll be up against standard police patrols, but once the government gets wind of the clash between your gang – the Saints – and Steelport's controlling coalition The Syndicate, it sends in the military. Of course, you then have an army base chock full of achingly desirable military hardware and experimental technology that you won't be able to resist pilfering.

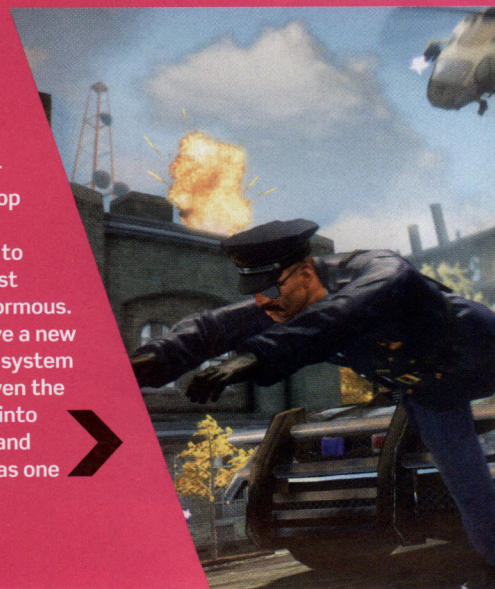
“VOLITION IS GIVING YOU SERIOUSLY DESTRUCTIVE KIT EARLY IN THE GAME”

We particularly love the tank that merrily squishes any car that gets caught under its treads – the crumple physics wouldn't look out of place in a Codemasters racing game.

Most of the military gear is easier to move around. The Predator drone made famous by *Call of Duty* allows you to steer a missile up the exhaust pipe of any car – or person – you choose. Better yet is the remote control gun. Rather than the done-to-

death exploding RC car, this allows you to take control of any full-size vehicle you point it at. The potential for winding up your co-op partner by driving everything they try to steal into the nearest body of water is enormous.

Weapons also have a new four-stage upgrade system that visibly turns even the most average guns into something blatant and spectacular. This was one

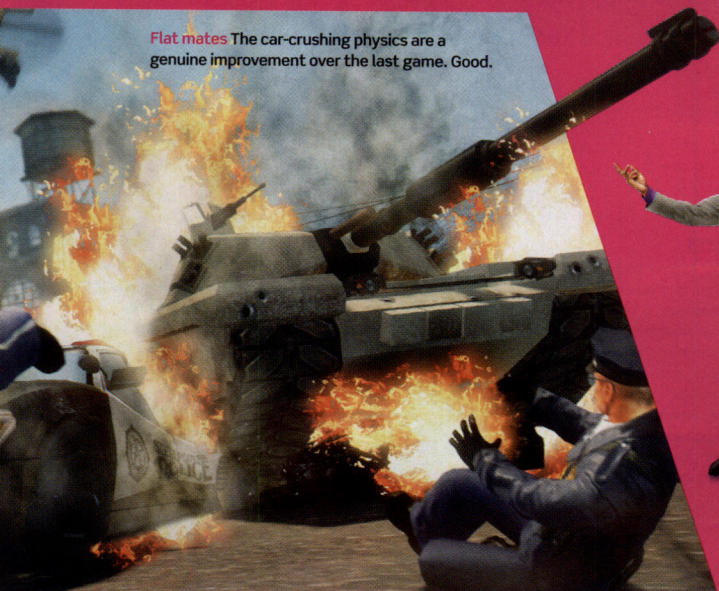


Saints Row: The Third

Cock fight In some ways, this is all you need to see to understand *Saints Row*. It's violent, but it's not serious.



Flat mates The car-crushing physics are a genuine improvement over the last game. Good.



WHAT'S THE STORY?

You'll be carving your own path



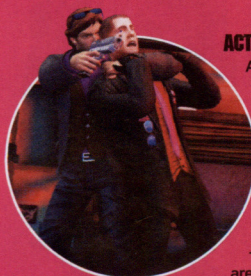
Saints Row 2 flirted with freedom of choice by letting you complete missions in any order you wanted, but this time your choices mean something: they'll bend and shape the narrative. Volition promises you'll be making "major, major" decisions at regular points, and each influences which of several endings you get. Whether those decisions go beyond killing/not killing someone remains to be seen - as does exactly how it will work with a naked co-op mate in tow, a player who may well have less investment in the plot than you.





TAKING THE TOWN

Making your presence felt in the city



ACTIVITIES

As you fight The Syndicate, you come across people who've already clashed with them. Your enemy's enemy is your friend, so helping by completing their activities – similar to the standalone challenges in *Saints Row 2* – will allow you to claim new areas of Steelport.



BUSINESSES

Once you earn a bit of cash you can buy your own small businesses. Obviously they bring in useful income and sell you stock at a discount, but they also contribute to the percentage of the city you own. Don't imagine you'll be buying nice wholefood stores, though.



SKYSCRAPERS

Take any of the four enemy strongholds and you get to build a ludicrously massive, Saints-branded skyscraper in its place. There are three height levels to unlock, too. By the end of the game, the Steelport skyline will look completely different. And no doubt very tasteful.

CRUEL AND THE GANGS

The Syndicate is a motley crew of individual factions



THE DECKERS

Leader: Matt Miller

A collection of whiny teenage hackers led by British hyper-nerd Matt Miller. They've turned a dilapidated power station into a security and hacking centre for The Syndicate. Miller, like your average *Call of Duty* divot, is massively arrogant online but a simpering coward in person.



THE LUCHADORES

Leader: Killbain

The colourful Luchadores are inspired by Mexican wrestling and are the enforcers of The Syndicate. Their leader Killbain is a 'roid crazy US wrestler who plied his trade in Mexico for many years. He's a total egomaniac and obsessed with maintaining his fame and notoriety.



MORNING STAR

Leader: Phillippe Loren

Taking care of casinos and the sex trade, Morning Star are the most ruthless of Steelport's gangs. Top man Loren is joined by Viola and Kiki De Winter, twin assassins described as "21st century pimps". They take a businesslike approach to the oldest trade in the world.



of the community's most requested features, so evidently all that internet bellowing wasn't in vain.

In an amusing move, each weapon has its own unique melee attack, with the twist being that every single one is a shot to the crotch. They range from a simple, forceful pistol-whip to the cobbles to more elaborate twirls that nevertheless still end up splitting somebody's atoms. The attacks are unisex, which can be a little uncomfortable, but it's hard not to giggle as your character rolls over the back of a startled businessman and, very purposefully, plants a foot on his daddy button. If that all wears

thin for you, there are running dropkicks and a quick-time event-based unarmed combat system for more conventional brawling and/or being a dick.

Fresh meat

Mastering the standard combat skills is only half the battle when it comes to the story. Volition is tired of standard open-world missions that simply fill a neighbourhood with goons and ask you to clean it out. According to the team, around 10% of missions in *Saints 2*'s featured a genuinely unique activity - this time the aim is for 75% to feature something fresh or unexpected.

The second mission, which also serves as your introduction to Steelport, is a prime example.

The Saints are riding high after the events of *SR2* and are top dogs in Stilwater... to the point where they've become energy drink-peddling celebs. Who said Rockstar have the monopoly on satire, eh? Then, during what should have been a routine bank job, an actor - tagging along to learn how to play Johnny Gat in a movie - triggers the silent alarm. The Saints go down. It then emerges the bank is owned by The Syndicate, a collection of gangs headed by the leader of the Morning Star faction, the irascible Belgian Phillippe Loren. Loren's annoyed the Saints made a run at the bank, but likes their style and invites them aboard his private jet to offer them a chance to join The Syndicate. The deal is in exchange for 66% of their profits. Unsurprisingly, you (as the leader of the Saints) tell him to

"MASTERING THE STANDARD COMBAT SKILLS IS ONLY HALF THE BATTLE"





Filthy Luchadore Each gang is colourful and highly stylised – a welcome change from 'gritty'.

“BLOW THINGS UP, LAND HELICOPTERS ON YOUR MATES AND CACKLE”

park his offer up his derriere, kicking off an enormous shootout. So far, so standard.

One step beyond

Things shake up when your mate Shaundi stumbles out of the plane, which is shedding cargo and SUVs at an alarming rate. So you strap on a parachute and give chase, skydiving between the falling crates and cars, flipping face up to blast pursuing heavies. It's a dramatically ridiculous moment worthy of a *Just Cause* game, and if you ever played *MDK* on PSone, expect an injection of warm, fuzzy nostalgia. But you're not done yet.

Catching Shaundi *should* signal the end of your worries, but the jet swings around and bears down on your chute. In a brilliant moment, you decide the solution is to drop Shaundi, shatter the windscreen of the jet, sail through the interior capping the survivors, grab another parachute and drop once again after your plummeting gang mate. It's huge, exhilarating and the banter between you and the incredulous Shaundi is well-written to boot.

And that's where *Saints Row: The Third* is going to win the cynical over. It seems exactly the kind of violent nonsense that has tabloid hacks frothing (at least until 5:30pm), but it's nowhere near as stupid as it pretends to be. Yes it's crass, enormously so, but it has the keen sense of fun that is missing from so many games in these grim,

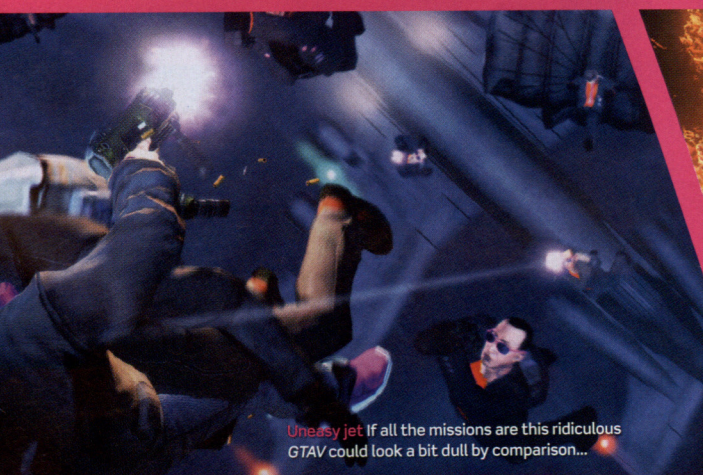
portentous, times.

This is design with the brakes off – if someone pipes up in a development meeting with an idea and it makes everyone laugh, say the devs, it goes in the game. The sandbox genre is a breeding ground for this kind of unfettered creativity. It's all playable in online co-op, too – doubling the maniac potential.

For all the technical excellence and emotional depth of Rockstar's worlds, sometimes you just want to blow things up, land helicopters on your mates and cackle. There's a reason why people falling into wedding cakes are more popular on YouTube than epics about xenophobia. It's the same reason most of us play games. And it's the same reason we can't wait for *Saints Row: The Third* – y'know, it just seems like it'll be funny. **PSM3**

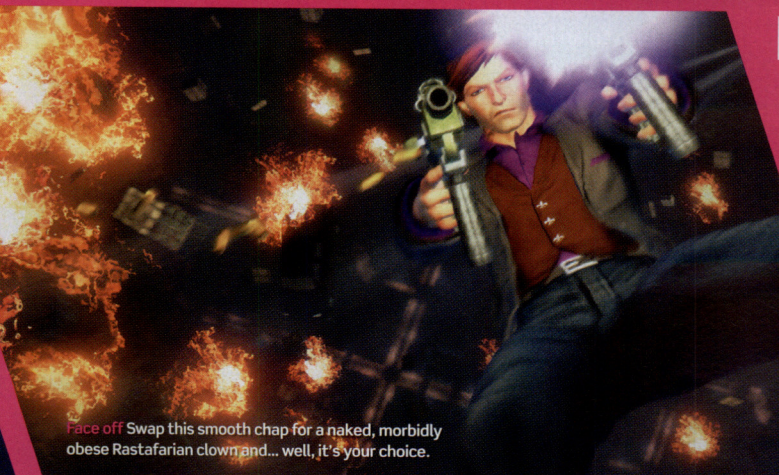


Pop gun Actually, this vast machine gun is one of the least exciting weapons. Weapons only get bigger.



Uneasy jet If all the missions are this ridiculous GTAIV could look a bit dull by comparison...

Saints Row: The Third



Face off Swap this smooth chap for a naked, morbidly obese Rastafarian clown and... well, it's your choice.

HOW TO MAKE A MANIAC

SR3's character creation improves

There's no option to import your character from SR2 as the already-great player maker has been revamped. New options include a wider range of physiques and a slew of new clothes (the stuff on the right is all in the game) plus, of course, it's all more detailed. You have greater control over gang outfits too, so if you simply *must* be flanked by an army of cat-faced purple pirates as you roam the streets of Steelport, then do it. Weirdo.



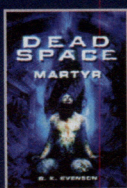
The PSM3 Book Club

Are videogame spin-off books any good? PSM3's writers review five of the best-sellers...

Dead Space: Martyr

Hundreds of years before anything interesting happened in the Dead Space universe, this did

■ Titan Books, \$US10.19 ■ amazon.com ■ B.K. Evenson



Michael Altman is Jesus. Sort of. He's regarded as a Messianic figure in the *Dead Space* fiction; the titular martyr whose death galvanised a religion that would come to be known as Unitology, the freaky-deaky cult you've been murdering brutally in both games. In fact, Altman's a name you'll recognise if you collected all those data logs. Unitologists never shut up about him. He's the 24th century's Justin Bieber.

Martyr is set on Earth, hundreds of years prior to the events on the Ishimura, and chronicles Altman's unwitting ascent from geophysicist to demigod. It's an origins story, in which Altman, for no reason, decides to investigate strange readings from the bottom of a crater. An insatiable drive to 'just sort of wanting to know what's going on' sees Altman uncover a sprawling conspiracy, place himself

in near constant peril and eventually blow up the bad guy's base.

His girlfriend's an anthropologist, handily enough, which warrants a side plot involving a tribal village discovering a Necromorph flapping about on the beach. There's a lovely paragraph about inflating grey skin sacs, before they all chuck sticks at it.

This leads, in turn to an incredibly trite 'honey I'm home' chapter, in which Altman and his anthropologist girlfriend realise that their two seemingly unrelated experiences might be somehow be, in fact, very closely related after all.

Martyr adds a great deal to the *Dead Space* canon, which makes it of some worth to anybody looking for something more from the games beyond stomping aliens until their limbs explode. **Steve Hogarty**

Verdict: There's a nice bit with some inflating grey sacs, but includes a sickening instance of the word 'holoscreen'. ■■■■■



“He felt bereft. And very lonely. He went to the observation porthole, slipping on the carcass on the floor on the way. Somebody should move that, he thought.”



Assassin's Creed Renaissance

Ezio has a stab at literary hero - but is he reborn or stillborn?

■ Penguin, \$US9.99 ■ amazon.com ■ Oliver Bowden



Just how much do you love tutorial missions? What about watching someone else play tutorial missions? What about reading about watching someone else

play tutorial missions? Renaissance delivers just that: a step-by-step narration of the events of *Assassin's Creed II* as though culled from a walkthrough, tutorial missions and all.

It's not quite complete - the game wraps its 15th century swashbuckling inside a near-future science fiction yarn. There, a hapless dude called Desmond uses a machine called the Animus to relive the lives of his Assassin ancestors - thus uncovering the resting place of mysterious artifacts which will be the key to victory over the nefarious world-dominating Templars. This is curly snipped from the book's narrative and, unsurprisingly, deprives the story of impetus. Instead, we are left with Ezio Auditore, Desmond's very-great-grandad and part of the dwindling tribe of Assassins sworn to protect Italy from a Templar conspiracy.

This premise instantly devolves into a checklist of action from the game itself. Characterisation goes no deeper than the print on the page and conversations largely serve to bridge the gap from one stabbing to another, as Ezio knifes his way through the Templar cabal. The structure adheres so closely to that of the game that even the set-piece killings become a chore. Repetitive action works in a game because you control the variety; reading about it in a novel is dull.

Despite the author's palpable struggle to maintain excitement in the subject, the words themselves aren't quite the pure sillage you'd expect. Oliver Bowden is a rather better writer than this adaptation might suggest.

Martin Davies

Verdict: Not the vilest trash: just a lifeless and perfunctory rehash of the game. ■■■■■

“Put your dagger back in its sheath,” she smiled as their bodies pressed together. “You’re the one who made me draw it. And you’re the one,” he added knowingly, “with its sheath.”

☞ Dante's Inferno ☞

Can Wildstorm cram EA's lengthy Dante's Inferno into a graphic novel? Can they hell

■ Wildstorm, \$US13.59 ■ amazon.com ■ Christos Gage and Diego Latorre



The sensible would assume that writers of video game tie-in comics would try and synthesise their source material down to a manageable amount of stuff. Trying to cram 20 hours of game into a hundred pages of splintered dialogue and pictures is a bad idea. Dante's Inferno is not sensible.

Instead, it's a breathless, airless comic in which main character Dante has but a few panels to murder all of western mythology's greatest monsters. Minos, Greek judge of the dead, represented here as a seven-storey skeleton with a sense of hyper-smell? Dead in six panels. The hooded figure of death, the unassailable spectre of ethereal mortality that pervades global culture? Yeah, Dante rips a bit of his face off then he falls over. Lucifer himself, lord of darkness, Beelzebub, Satan and all of the world's evil combined into one spirit? Three pages and a stabbing with a big scythe and he's banished for all eternity.

The closest the book gets to its original source material - the 14th Century poem, not the game - is a short jaunt through the nine circles of hell. In Dante Alighieri's work, it's a life-altering slog told as allegory. Here, it's a quick jaunt through a few pages, with Dante stopping every so often to cleave a few babies in half. The book turns the greatest trial imaginable by humans into a sightseeing tour, punctuated by some light slaying. Look to your left, Dante, and you'll see a minotaur...oh wait you've killed it.

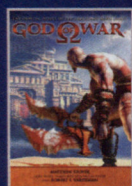
“Merciful God.
The waterfalls.
They pour...BODIES.”

Stripped of the chance to actually play the main character, Dante's rendered totally unsympathetic. His choice to bone a slave girl makes his supposed love for fiancée Beatrice suspect, even though it propels him through hell itself. If he loves her so much he'd actually murder Satan, why can't he keep it in his pants when he's away on a crusade? **Rich McCormick**
Verdict: Dante's Inferno is muddled and overly frantic. Ignore the story and let the pretty, nightmarish art wash over you. ■■■■■

God Of War

Nothing more than a glorified walkthrough

■ Titan Books, \$US10.20 ■ amazon.com ■ Matthew Stover



The opening line of God Of War demonstrates why this novel fails to capture the excitement of the game it's based on. "At the brink of nameless cliffs he

stands: a statue in travertine." When we think of God of War, we don't think of travertine - we think of Kratos

violently removing a monster's head.

And when the action does kick in, the descriptions leave a lot to be desired: "Kratos wove a curtain of death about them." "He slapped him with the flat of his blade, as a Spartan father disciplines a naughty child."

The Gods in particular are characterised as a bunch of vacuous meatheads, with no trace of divinity. Their dialogue is so facile, it wouldn't be entirely out of place in an episode of Neighbours. The mighty Zeus himself sounds like a whining emo teenager, rather than the thunder-flinging deity he should be.

But the real problem here is that the author does little to make the story its own, instead documenting the gameplay like an over-descriptive walkthrough. In fact, they even credit a YouTuber, thanking him for the GOW videos he's posted. It's a revealing insight into the process, if nothing else. Gods randomly appear to give Kratos a new weapon or power,

The past he cannot flee brings him the agony and madness that are his only companions.



Aphrodite rocks up with a quick tutorial on how to use Medusa's head, and he even gets his 'general magical reservoir' refilled when Zeus hands over his thunderbolts. They might as well have written 'GAME DATA IS SAVING' and been done with it.

To make things worse, Kratos often pauses between the butchery to ponder his life. These sections are so earnest, they'd shame an especially fragile teenage goth. "Ashes, only ashes, despair, and the lash of winter rain: these are his wages for ten years' service to the gods. Ashes and rot and decay, a cold and lonely death." Um, yes. Wise words. Although, in all honesty, this is exactly how I felt by the time I got to the end. Rot and decay? I hear you, Kratos, buddy. I hear you. **Kim Richards**

Verdict: An average adaptation that fails to capture the visceral, epic power of the games. ■■■■■

Homefront: The Voice Of Freedom

War. War never... starts?

■ Titan Books, \$12.95 ■ randomhouse.com.au ■ John Milius & Raymond Benson



Ah, war. Big, boomy, legs blown off, gun-rattling war. Don't expect too much of that here. Instead you'll get to follow former

reporter turned subversive resistance radio DJ, the titular Voice Of Freedom. The game may be full of guns and big robot death-drones, but this is about a man with a transmitter and a Miles Davis CD. Seriously, that happens. America is being ransacked by an invading North Korea and he plays them jazz.

Actually, the story isn't too bad - just plainly told. Little of the dialogue sparks, but it is, at least, descriptive. Like beige or a value pack of chicken nuggets, it's there simply to relay dull information. Take, for example, this

line that introduces one major character: "For a thirty-one-year-old women with a degree in electrical engineering, it was ironic that her skills hadn't been in demand until a year ago." Don't you just love her already? Elsewhere, when there is some fighting, the horrors of war are explained with all the passion of a tax return. "Walker saw someone on fire, screaming in agony, running blindly toward a private hell." Where's the blistering skin, or the noise and heat? How can a man on fire not be exciting?

It's possible that burning man's private hell might be the first hundred or so pages. A large chunk of the opening explains how America collapsed and North Korea became powerful enough to invade in painstaking detail. It's almost as if the author is worried we might not buy into the setup, and explains almost at a socio-political level how it happens. And I thought we were going to see some shit get blown up.

It's engaging enough; just told like a list of events, often skipping over pretty big points. "Walker knew it signified America was now occupied." That's your invasion right there. Later, when he meets his love interest, they meet and fall for each other in a matter of sentences. There's no sense of passion. We're just told it happened. And that pretty much sums up the book. Stuff occurs and you're told about it. Any excitement you'll need to bring yourself, or find in the game. **Leon Hurley**

Verdict: A not entirely awful story stifled by stiff words and little depth. ■■■■■

"Now then," the Korean said.
"Are you going to talk? No?
Then who do I get to torture first?"

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Reviews

Instant PlayStation justice



64 Crysis 2

HIGHLIGHTS

Alien invasion in *Crysis 2*
Cheating lovers in *Catherine*
Mixing it up in *de Blob 2*

► Start

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“Not even seeing these heroes together will stop the boredom”

PS Move Heroes pg 70



'Buy It' Award
If you see this then you should buy that game.

THE TEAM **Five mighty warriors fighting tirelessly for truth**



Lucy O'Brien
Specialist in Action, RPGs, relaying Family Guy quotes, badly.
Playing *Motorstorm: Apocalypse*: "This. Is. This is YES."



Andy Hartup
Specialist in Action, shooters, unlocking actual trophies.
Playing *Crysis 2*: "I don't need the platinum - I have the real thing"



Andy Kelly
Specialist in Shooters, RPGs, slangin', gang-bangin'.
Playing *Stacking*: "Nothing's more street than Russian dolls, yo."



Steve Williams
Specialist in Action, racing, trying to out-stare the camera.
Playing *Yakuza 4*: "My steely gaze is as powerful as Kazuma's fists."



Justin Towell
Specialist in Racing, platformers, hiding behind his hair.
Playing *Shift 2*: "Why hasn't anyone made a car with long hair yet?"

Format PS3 | Price \$109.95 | Release Out now | Pub EA | Dev Crytek | Multiplayer 1-12

Crysis 2

Thrilling, handsome, but suffers a mid-life... well, you know

Before you ask, *Crysis 2* looks as good as *Killzone 3* on PS3 – and the port isn't 'inferior' to the Xbox version (if a bit more washed-out, perhaps) as early code led some journalists to conclude. Is it a better game than *Killzone 3*? Judged on the solo campaign, yes. The plot, the combat scenarios, the creativity, the set-pieces, the characters, and even the multiplayer are all a step (of varying sizes) above Guerrilla's game. The multiplayer debate is less clear but *Crysis 2*, largely, succeeds on its own terms, bar some awkward pacing and unbalanced upgrades.

The opening scene is likely to baffle more than it thrills, though. After a montage of news footage setting up the scenario (there's some kind of alien virus tearing up New York) the scene switches to the inside of a submarine, filled with beef-headed US marines talking about manly stuff like drinking and kicking various asses. You know the score. The sub inexplicably sinks, you swim to the surface, get shot and wash up in Battery Park. Here a man in a metal suit drags you off, puts you inside said suit, then shoots himself in the head. His name is Prophet – a familiar face if you played the first *Crysis*. Problem is, since you still need a mega-spec PC to run the original, you'll likely be baffled. It's here we'd benefit from a 'Previously on...' movie, like in *Dead Space 2*.

Crysis management

Pretty soon it all kicks off in earnest. You're tasked with finding a scientist named Gould who needs information stored in your suit to fight the alien virus. A shady PMC called 'Cell' is dead set on stopping you and swiping that data for itself, which sets up the first four or so hours of the game. Here *Crysis 2* feels like a genre-defying tactical shooter. Every combat area is flagged (your suit informs you which tactical options are available) and you're encouraged to

scout out each scene and decide how you want to tackle it. You can go in guns blazing and face being overwhelmed, you can flank and pick off key targets, or if you're really sneaky you can avoid conflict altogether. The wealth of choice and the smart way it's all implemented is liberating.

Success lies in how you manage your Nanosuit's power. Early on you feel vulnerable; energy drains frighteningly fast when you walk while cloaked, and enemies have perfect eye-sight, so if you're spotted it all escalates fast. Similarly, if you end up in an open fight, your Nanosuit's max armour setting won't last long under sustained fire. So scouting ahead is key. Where do you cloak? Where



KNOW IT NOW

- The most beautiful shooter on PS3? ☒
- The best version of New York on PS3? ☒
- TimeSplitters* devs did multiplayer? ☒
- Entertains for the full 12 hours? ☐

Crysis 2

"It's all very tactical, and wading straight in often means a short, sharp death"

PSM3
BUY IT



You can grab enemies and throw them off buildings. Nice...

"At the beginning, Crysis 2 feels like a genre-defying tactical shooter"

do you stop to recharge your suit's juice? Which grunts do you take out first? Where is the best spot to snipe from? It's all very tactical, and simply wading in often means short, sharp death. Weapons feel very tuned towards this hit and run style of play too. Assault rifles are functional without being spectacular, pistols are surprisingly effective side-arms, and shotguns blast enemies as hard as they should. You can even mod them on the fly, adding suppressors to shotguns and scopes to your rifles.

The dark side

Then the aliens (Ceph) arrive in

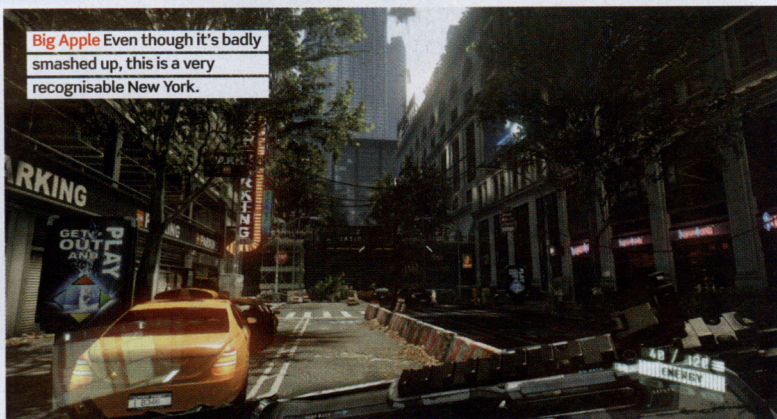
Saving energy Manage your suit's power carefully. If you fire while cloaked, all your energy is drained, so you need to choose the right moment to strike.



Alien wares Your Nanosuit plays a vital role in this game's plot. It's tied to the alien invasion of NY.

earnest and it all goes wrong. Tactics go straight out of the window. The Ceph seem to spot you even when you're cloaked, making stealth kills a pain, and there are so many dotted through each level it's virtually impossible to navigate through without some kind of fight. Night draws in, making every level dark, and all of a sudden combat feels like a complete drudge. It's a complete departure from the smart, tactical shooter you started playing in a New York bathed by glorious rays of sunshine and luminous dust-clouds. Even Hans Zimmer's stirring score, which adds so much

Prophet who? At the start you (codename Alcatraz) are rescued by a Nanosuited man called Prophet. He's a returning character from the first game, where the Ceph are first discovered on a tropical island called Lingshan, before they suddenly 'appear' in New York.



Big Apple Even though it's badly smashed up, this is a very recognisable New York.

atmosphere at the start, seems to fade into a pedestrian hum of stock classical music at the mid-way point.

This rather messy descent into disappointment is compounded by the Nanosuit upgrades. You can upgrade your suit abilities by collecting Ceph DNA and spending it on 'perks' which leap from useless to overpowered with one ill-considered bound. While, for

example, being able to see enemy patrol patterns is largely useless as their movements are mostly random, the ability to upgrade your stealth cloak to such a degree that you can stroll leisurely through potentially huge firefights seems ridiculously overpowered. We practically sprinted through some of the latter stages of the game without firing a shot.

And when Crytek try to reel you in, to force you into a fight, it all goes horribly wrong. The siege in Times Square is a perfect example of the worst type of game design. Trapped in a large square block of level, you first fight off waves of Ceph (some of which get stuck on scenery, so you need to go looking for them to trigger the second part of the set-piece) before facing a boss... and endless waves of respawning enemies. It's difficult, it's dull, it's frustrating and it marks a

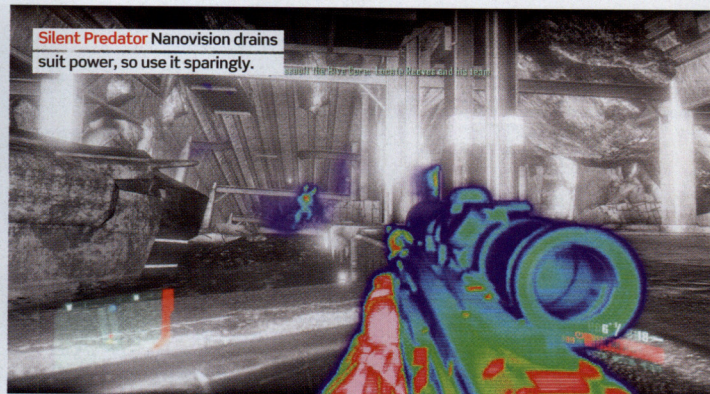
"Were it not for the great multiplayer, *Crysis* would be staring down the barrel of a smaller score"

Crysis 2

"Sessions of Assault turn into soggy-palmed games of cat and mouse"



Sunny delight The CryEngine does a great line in stunning sun-sets.



Silent Predator Nanovision drains suit power, so use it sparingly.



Captain Obvious You've played games before. You know to shoot the glowing red bits, right?



Surface to aaargh That Ceph drop-ship can be a pain if it spots you. A few rockets will send it scurrying.

low-point in a lengthy campaign. Start to finish, you'll be playing *Crysis 2* for 12 or so hours, but its flabby mid-section will make you long for the intense, to-the-point brevity of a *Killzone 3* or a *Homefront*.

Suitable partners

What doesn't out-stay its welcome, however, is the multiplayer. In short you've got six modes over 12 maps, each riffing off a location from the story. You've got your deathmatch,

team deathmatch, Capture The Flag, King Of The Kill variants. The stand-out mode for us was Assault. Here you're split into two teams. One plays as Nano-suited operatives with healthy stealth stats but no primary weapons; the other as regular troops (so no Nanosuit) with automatic rifles. The operatives need to hack data terminals to win, the guards need to kill them. Once you're dead, you don't respawn. The end result is tense, tactical multiplayer that brings back memories

Tagged and bagged During multiplayer you can pick up dog tags, which are mini-medals (similar to *LBP2*'s Pins) earned purely for fun. Our favourite? Afternoon Tea is awarded for tea-bagging ten victims...

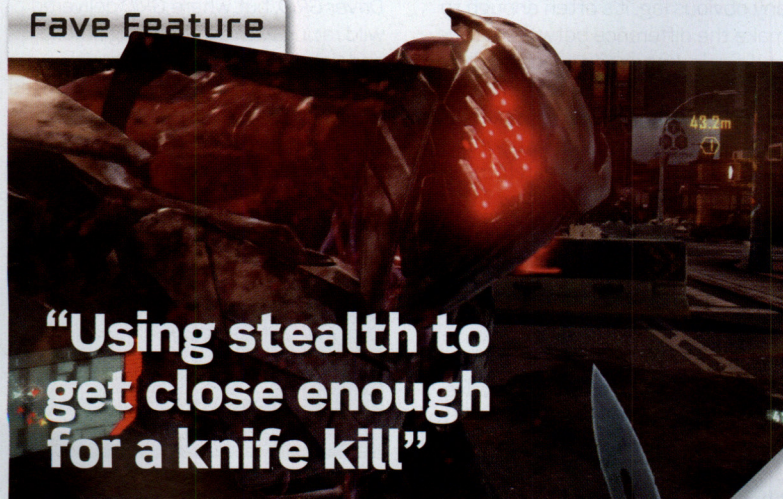


of *Splinter Cell*'s Spy vs Mercs mode. As a stealth player, detection usually equals death, but as a grunt it's tough to keep track of all the terminals that can potentially be hacked, so sessions turn into soggy-palmed games of cat and mouse. It really plays to the strengths of *Crysis 2*'s gameplay and shows Crytek UK (formerly Free Radical, the developers of the *TimeSplitters* series) have still got the talent to innovate and entertain in the multiplayer arena.

In fact, were it not for the multiplayer *Crysis* would be staring down the barrel of a smaller score. Although laced with flashes of inspiration and moments of incredible visual spectacle (at one point you stand and watch as the MetLife building collapses in a horrifyingly realistic way onto a bunch of civilians), the single player starts to drag long before the credits; its smart, twisting plot not helped by a lack of exposition at the start. We'd have liked a little more scene-setting, a little less forced mid-game action. Crytek know how to dazzle and throw cod-science around, but careless pacing and occasional poor design is the decay lurking under this game's otherwise perfect smile.

Andy Hartup

Fave Feature



"Using stealth to get close enough for a knife kill"

PSM3 Verdict



Crysis 2 contains...

New York | Horrific viruses | A flabby mid-section | Great online modes

Overall A decent, if repetitive, shooter with incredible looks and set-pieces.

84

Money talks Cars range from road stuff all the way to GT1 prototypes. Can't unlock something? Then buy it with real money from the Store. That's the spirit.



Format PS3 | Price \$109.95 | Release Out Now | Pub EA | Dev Slightly Mad Studios | Multiplayer 1-12

SHIFT 2 Unleashed

PS3's greatest racer... bar one contentious, possibly ruinous flaw

KNOW IT NOW

Great looking night racing?



Licensed car trashing?



EA's Autolog online wonder?



Handy rewind feature?



All it needed was a bit more polish, better handling and *Hot Pursuit*'s online functionality and *SHIFT 2* would be a winner, no question. Sadly, EA's sequel ignores many of the previous game's best ideas, replacing them with patchy presentation, mixed racing and – unless our two versions of review code were 'broken' – a truly perplexing, game-breaking flaw.

The problem? The revised handling model is lost behind astonishing input lag. What at first feels like a curious dead zone turns out to be what's getting on for a second of waiting for the car to respond to anything. It's like playing a PSone racer over PSP's Remote Play function.

This lag, combined with relatively twitchy handling and aggressive AI can have you on the edge of your seat for all the wrong reasons.

There are deadzone and steering sensitivity settings and prolonged

fiddling can tone down the effects – but not fix the problem.

Odder still, Xbox 360 and PC versions don't suffer the same issue, offering crisper, more usable control without any obvious lag. It's often enough to make the difference between a slide and a spin, between squeezing through a gap or triggering an accident, or having a laugh pushing your car hard or weaving warily around the roads.

To be fair, some testers felt the lag was something they could get used to, though few doubted it was there.

This issue has massively affected the score – it's such a fundamental one, and we can't seriously recommend this on PS3 when clearly superior versions exist – but potentially it could disappear. EA could, in theory, solve whatever problem is causing it with a patch. Were this to happen, we'd seriously consider a re-review, because beneath this needless inaccuracy there

seems to be a strong racer just waiting to be... unleashed.

Steering clear

SHIFT was clearly influenced by *Race Driver GRID*, but where *GRID* delivered wild racing with screen-filling smoke and debris, *SHIFT* felt pedestrian.

Unleashed's helmet cam is supposed to deliver that excitement, with depth-of-field effects and extra-kinetic crashes, but the tilting, apex-hunting gaze is hard to work with. The reason most people use on-board views is to



Night fantastic Night races are new and look good, especially on dramatic tracks like Spa.

SHIFT 2 Unleashed

"We can't seriously recommend this on PS3 when superior versions exist"



Rubber fetish This might just be the first racing game to render 'marbles' on the outside of corners.



Like they care Starts see you on the grid with girls and mechanics all around. However, the buzz is soon gone – it needs much more of this sort of thing.

you where you're supposed to be looking, but you're unlikely to set any lap records with it. Fortunately, the regular cockpit view is still there and much more playable.

Interiors are superbly detailed and the multiple light-sourced shadows of your car from rivals' headlights are a gorgeous graphical trick, putting *Gran Turismo 5*'s feted night racing firmly in the shade. As it were.

SHIFT's presentation style has been diluted too. The live action explanatory

Yo, keep it real
Genuine racers
such as Chris Rado, World Time Attack champion, offer their advice in pre-series videos. We doubt they all talk so 'cool' in real life, mind you... hooray for scripts, huh?



scenes are well done, but result screens are just a bland and faintly confusing mix of words and numbers. Only the sexlessly-presented promises of imminent upgrades and Autolog notifications spur you on.

Oh, but Autolog, how we love you. It's a massive plus point, displaying online friends' times, notifying you when you're beaten, recommending your next event and providing the ultimate bragging forum.

Serious face

But what about *SHIFT*'s own plus points? Bizarrely, they're played down. The original aggression mechanic needed tweaking, yes – and surely that's what sequels are for – yet *Unleashed* just lumps all your good and bad driving into one generic XP stat. Shame. Similarly, the enjoyable 'master the corner' challenges – which have you ticking off perfect lines – returns, but aren't championed at all. Every promising arcade feature has been stifled, leaving only the drift events as clearly superior to the original. These, however, are pretty hardcore and may not please those who don't mind lag.

Despite the niggles, it's a promising, content-rich game and almost the opposite of *Gran Turismo 5* – which, for all its problems, never faltered in the place where racing games truly live. The handling.

Justin Towell

Fave Feature



"Turning crashes into sweet photos"

TAKE PHOTO BAD

PSM3 Verdict



SHIFT 2 Unleashed contains...
Laggy steering | Disorientating helmet cam | Biffy Clyro tunes

Overall A solid racer ruined – on PS3 – by lag. Wait and hope it's patched.

66



Format PS3 | Price \$99.95 | Release Out Now | Pub Sony | Dev Nihilistic Software | Multiplayer 1-2

PlayStation Move Heroes

Watch as your favourite platforming icons go from heroes to zeroes

PS3's motion-sensing Move controller launched last September and, with the exception of *Sports Champions* and *Dead Space: Extraction*, there hasn't really been a killer title to compliment it yet. Sadly, uniting PlayStation's finest platforming heroes – including Ratchet and Clank, Sly and Bentley, and Jak and Daxter – for enforced motion-based activity does little to rectify this.

PlayStation Move Heroes is little more than a series of repetitive mini-games that all revolve around the relatively limited range of gestures motion-controlled gaming tends to offer. Point the controller and pull the trigger to shoot. Swing your arm to bowl explosives or release flying discs. Swing your arm a little more vigorously to smash baddies, and swing it more methodically to whip them to death.

Actually, the whip-based challenges are the best of the bunch, as the sharpness of the motion controller means that smashing through waves of

bad guys is joyously destructive. The rest of the games, however, get very dull very quickly.

Fallen stars

It'd be nice to say that co-op action is *Move Heroes'* saving grace, and it is – if you like being a targeting reticle. It's a missed opportunity that, in a game with so many heroes, the second player is reduced to aiming duties.

Playing *Move Heroes* is like watching all of your favourite platforming icons being forced to sexy dance while leery punters throw filthy dollars at them. Never mind that you're an award-winning lombax legend, Sony needs its waggle-sticked Mario killer.

Yes, it's nice to see them alive and well – but they're not really the heroes we're looking for.

None of their original developers have been involved with this title and it shows. These are mere character skins, devoid of personality. It's clear that

You were saying? All of the original voice actors have returned to inject some life into the six heroes once more – if only they had more to say than just “enh”, “argh” and “where the hell is my agent?”



Usual suspects This line-up should cause trembly kneed levels of excitement. But sadly, not here.

PlayStation Move Heroes is for a younger audience with a dip-in-dip-out attitude to gaming and to that end it works pretty well. But anyone looking for a serious challenge is best returning to the platforming titles that made these champions so great. That is, if you can look them in the eye. PS Move needs a real hero. Fast. **Kim Richards**

PSM3 Verdict



PlayStation Move Heroes contains...
Wagglng action | Explosive bowling
Dead-eyed platforming legends

Overall A limited mix of mini-games that will delight children, but no one else.

58



T3 AUSTRALIA'S GADGET MAGAZINE



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T3.com.au

Guilty party Sassy Catherine seduces the already-attached Vincent with ease – but how much can his conscience withstand?



Format PS3 | Price ¥7,329 (\$88) | Release Out now (import)
Pub Atlus | Dev Atlus | Multiplayer 1-2

Catherine

An old-school puzzler based on the oldest problems of all

KNOW IT NOW

Joypad-hurling puzzle sections



Raunchy storyline



Brilliantly observed humour



Fits in a neat pigeonhole



We're finding it difficult to explain why *Catherine* is such a thrilling game. It's a puzzle game in essence – maybe a platform puzzle game – but it's a puzzle game in wolf's clothing, and it draws you in.

Dressed up as a B-movie horror, the compelling story runs thus: people are dying in their sleep, victims of nightmares where they fall from an impossible height. Yet this is the least of the problems suffered by Vincent, our protagonist: his highly strung girlfriend, Katherine, is pregnant and wants to get married. Later, drunk and despairing, Vincent meets Catherine – a mysterious, carefree temptress who seduces him in a heartbeat.

As the first HD game from Atlus' *Persona* team, all of this is presented via impossibly stylish anime cut-scenes of *Final Fantasy* length, but ones you actually want to watch. And as the story grows darker and Vincent's web of lies more complex, so

do his dreams.

Puzzling over women

Here's where the bulk of the gameplay lies. You climb the tower of Babel, pulling and pushing cubes to create steps Vincent can scale. It's kind of a reverse version of *Tetris* meets classic platformer *Q*bert* or early PlayStation game *Kurushi*. It's excellently surreal: Vincent is dressed only in his boxers, carrying a pillow and sprouting a fine pair of sheep's antlers; other climbers are fully transformed sheep based on people he's met during the day.

The blocks below disappear one line at a time, keeping you moving full pelt. Some blocks explode, have hidden spikes or are made of slippery ice; powerups litter

the way – coins, bonus blocks, retries, a lightning bolt that zaps any fellow sheep who might happen to be blocking your path.

Each level ends with a horrifying boss chasing you relentlessly through the final stage. Again, these are plucked from Vincent's traumas, but twisted into genuinely grotesque configurations: a bum-monster with

batting eyes and lolling tongue that symbolises love-rat

Vincent's lust-ridden guilt, a fork-wielding pair of giant hands that scream "Take responsibility!" or a vast baby whose wails send shivers down your spine. Each will crush poor Vincent into a pile of bloody bones.

Ignore the soft promises of those... eyes, Catherine is very hard. Even Easy





Catherine

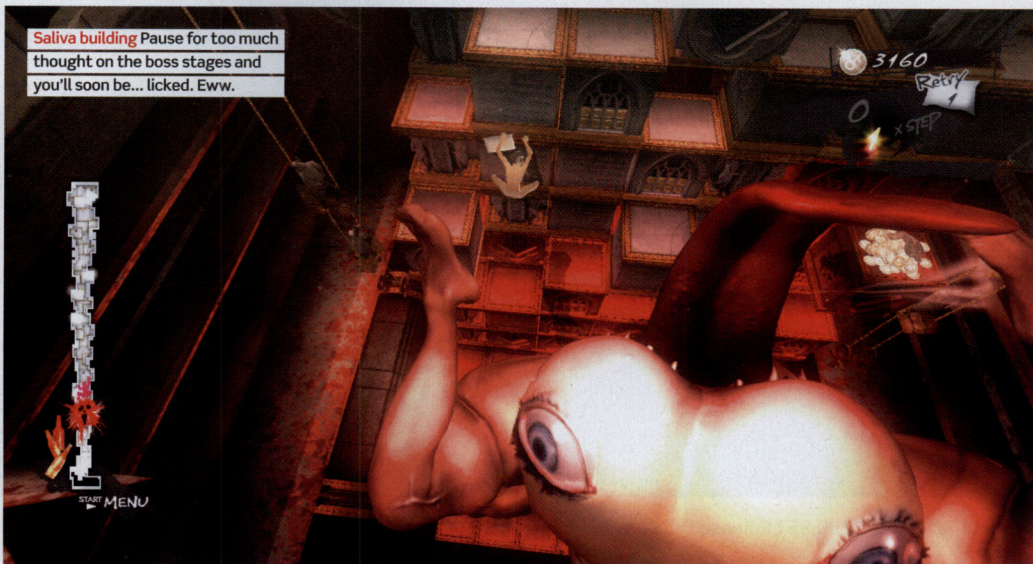
"A bum-monster with batting eyes and lolling tongue symbolises Vincent's guilt."



Isle of Sheepy Between stages of Babel, you enter a surreal floating island to buy upgrades from other sheep-men. Obviously.



Bar humbug At the Stray Sheep, Vincent can knock back speed-enhancing drinks and chat with his mates.



Saliva building Pause for too much thought on the boss stages and you'll soon be... licked. Eww.

Mode, with its undo function and liberal retries, will eventually have you throwing the joypad in sheer frustration. But as with all the best puzzlers, you'll pick it up and dive straight back in for one more go.

Thankfully, you can switch difficulty at any time; Atlus has already patched

in an easier mode, which is good news if you're struggling.

Sexy, not sexist

The horror of the puzzle section is balanced perfectly by a raunchy, unsettling, surprisingly feminist storyline. Between levels Vincent hangs out at the Stray Sheep bar drinking with his friends, and now it's an RPG: talk to NPCs to glean information and email with Catherine (who doesn't know Vincent is attached and occasionally sends flirty photos) and Katherine (whom you must keep

Two towers
The minigame, Rapunzel, available at the Stray Sheep bar in the form of a free-to-play arcade cabinet, is a 16-bit rendition of the Babel puzzle section. As for multiplayer, Babel itself offers two head-to-head puzzle-off options.



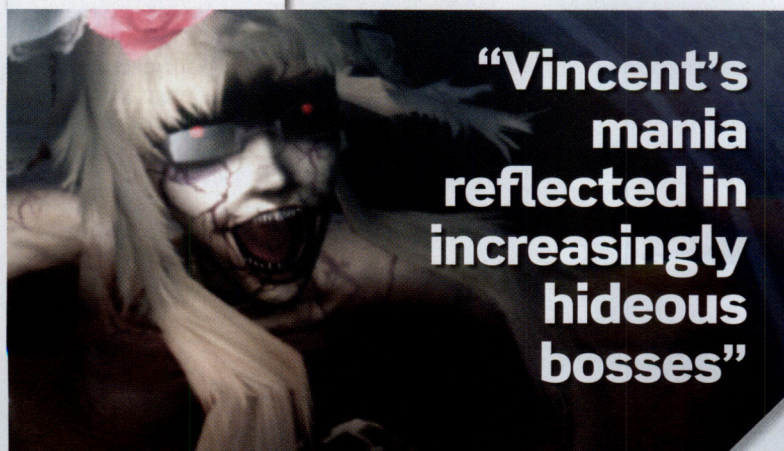
sweet with your replies).

Online play is limited to moral questions between tower stages, such as "Whose responsibility is it when you cheat on someone?" with a pie chart showing how other players responded, but really *Catherine* is (ironically) a solo experience. And it's beautiful. The presentation is super-slick, Studio 4°C's animation is stupendous, the Japanese voice acting is perfect (the US version has good actors lined up too) and that tight script is wittily observed.

The biggest nightmare is that there's still no Australian release announced for this bizarrely absorbing title; Japanese-only banter might make it a tricky import, but you could wait for the US version.

If you're looking for something to test your old-school instincts and reflexes, your love for *Catherine* will drive you to madness. **Daniel Robson**

Fave Feature



"Vincent's mania reflected in increasingly hideous bosses"

PSM3 Verdict



Catherine contains...

Challenge | Feminist undertones
A seductive vixen | A dirty love rat

Overall Plays like a fever dream – but we'd advise waiting for the US version.

80

End of days *Apocalypse* dumps *MotorStorm*'s buggies, bikes and big-rigs at the end of civilisation for the extremest of sports.



Format PS3 | Price \$109.95 | Release Out Now | Pub Sony | Dev Evolution Studios | Multiplayer 1-16

MotorStorm Apocalypse

Showing signs of rust, but still a chaotic racer with plenty of thrills

KNOW IT NOW

Fat-tyred off-road mayhem?



Apocalyptic setting?



Split/Second-style collapsing cities?



Much mud and dirt on track?



We're bored of mud. That's the big message from off-road threequel *MotorStorm: Apocalypse*, which has dumped the rally-esque filth for tearing paths through the tumbling remains of human civilisation. It's quite a leap. Gone are the mountainside circuits and jungle raceways, replaced by Armageddon itself. Instead of trees and rocks you avoid collapsing skyscrapers, furious floods and a sweep of crumbling environments which show our world falling to pieces.

As changes go, this is huge and fundamental, yet the racing feels very familiar. *Apocalypse* features the same mix of trail bikes, ATVs and big rig bullies as its predecessors, with the same trade off between manoeuvrability and track-dominating muscle. Choose a fragile dirt bike and you'll enjoy hitting the first turn ahead of the pack... but you should also be prepared to see your rider's broken body cartwheeling across the tarmac and slamming into lampposts and debris. Go for a haulage

monster, on the other hand, and you'll spend your time desperately trying to maintain speed, all the while enjoying the sight of racers bouncing harmlessly off your massive murder machine.

Give me a boost

Once again, nailing quick lap times comes down to smart use of *MotorStorm*'s risk/reward boost system. Splurging the nitro gives you a screen-shuddering hit of speed, but heats your engine to exploding point unless you ease off. Altering your line to crash through water

soothes the angry heat gauge in the bottom of the screen, and *Apocalypse* introduces fat yellow water barrels which have the same effect. So the pattern becomes boost, swerve, cool, boost, interrupted only by thumping collisions with rivals and car-compacting impacts with the solid bits of world appearing unexpectedly in front of your face.

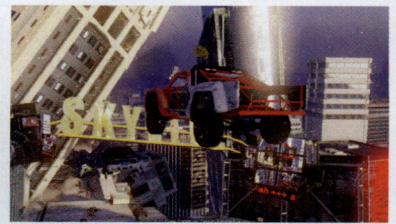
This is something that happens an unusual amount in

Apocalypse, thanks both to a new approach to track design and the fact the tracks themselves are frequently falling to pieces, lobbing new obstacles in your way. It's a clear attempt to carve out a



MotorStorm Apocalypse

"Suddenly you're speeding along a Golden Gate-style bridge that's bucking and warping"



Towering inferno The collapsing skyscraper rooftop track is *Apocalypse*'s absolute standout setting.



Stood up The game was delayed out of respect to the Japanese crisis.

new 'unique selling point' – given that 'mud' and 'brown' hardly qualify as unique – and after a few early bumps the result is spectacular.

At first you're just driving through torn-up roads and messy suburbia, and you'd be forgiven for thinking the game had gone a) mad and b) super-generic. But then things escalate. Suddenly you're speeding along a Golden Gate-style suspension bridge that's bucking and warping with every lap, then around the wooden pier walkways of a beach thrashed by giant waves and tornado-thrown boats. Our favourite – the most hectic – takes place on top of several city towers, with racers leaping from roof to roof, desperately threading a maze of alternate routes that wind over, around and even through office buildings. Trying to pick a path through all the chaos and not spear over the edge to fiery doom is thrilling, and hard.

The obvious comparison is with Disney's *Split/Second: Velocity*. But where that racer's crashing scenery



Bike me Attacking other racers is easier from the safety of a car, but bikers can swing their fists at passing vehicles. Obviously, that'll really hurt them.

was triggered by the player, in *MotorStorm Apocalypse* it happens to you regardless. On the one hand it makes the destruction feel a little automated – there's a definite thrill to nailing an opponent with a perfectly-timed *Split/Second* disaster. But on the other hand, *Apocalypse* is significantly more spectacular, and with the emphasis taken off combat you're free to concentrate on simply driving fast. And surviving, of course.

Comic caper Definitely the stupidest things here are the sub-inFamous animated comic-book cut-scenes. These tell a boring, ridiculous story about boringly extreme racers chasing adrenaline highs in the collapsing city. Blah.



In your face

For the few people with the equipment to take advantage, the 3D does soften the ugly blow to an extent. The game's clearly been designed with it in mind, and when a distant building collapses into the foreground the sense of perspective is incredible. Ironically, there's often *too much* going on to really appreciate the effect.

MotorStorm Apocalypse is a case of one step forward, one step back. The racing is still a tightly balanced arcade-handling joy, and once it really warms to the task the new setting is way better than a bit of sand, dirt and water. But for a series we've come to love with our eyes as much as our hearts, *Apocalypse* is a little disappointing.

Nathan Ditum

Fave Feature



"Desperate survivors clinging to your car"

PSM3 Verdict



MotorStorm Apocalypse contains...
Cheerful handling | Insane tracks
Some ugly textures | Solid 3D

Overall Not quite the juggernaut it was at launch, but still a very playable racer.

81

Peek-a-boo Damage shreds Aya's clothes, though her undies are indestructible. Funny that.



Format PSP | Price \$69.95 | Release Out Now | Multiplayer None

The 3rd Birthday

Sequel to PSone classic *Parasite Eve* goes all G.I. Jane

You certainly can't criticise the *Parasite Eve* games for sticking to a formula. The original was an action RPG, the sequel a *Resident Evil*-style survival horror and this – called *The 3rd Birthday* but effectively *Parasite Eve 3* – is a fast-paced third-person shooter. The constant in all three is heroine Aya Brea; a kick-ass cop who has saved New York from genetically-engineered monsters. Twice. Oddly, for a city-saving hero, she has the personality of a damp sponge.

The old Eve oh

To be fair, she has lost her memory and been turned into a bio-weapon for the Counter Twisted Investigation team. Plus, what she lacks in sparkling personality is made up with her Overdrive ability. It may have lost a little

something in translation, but nevertheless it's also the thing that lifts *The 3rd Birthday* from a forgettable shooter to a rather tight, action-packed game.

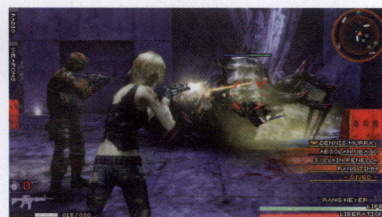
The Overdrive is Aya's ability to 'dive' into the consciousness of others – both in the past and present – and take over their bodies. Jumping into soldiers allows her not only to pick up their weapon loadout and health levels, but steal their strategic positions too.

In boss battles, this can be particularly useful; ditching weakened 'hosts' for fresh ones can keep you alive, allowing you to outflank enemies or even position soldiers in their own crossfire. Aya can also unleash an Overdrive kill: with regular Twisted (as your enemies are known) this means bursting them from the inside. With bosses this causes big damage.

Speed freaks

All this makes things pleasingly fast-paced and exciting. The way Aya ditches hosts when close to death while leaping instantly around levels couldn't be further from the old, cautious survival horror creeping. There's little finesse to the shooting

Gene genie
Those gruesome pop-them-from-the-inside Overdrive kills occasionally unlock new DNA sequences, which can then be used to enhance and improve Aya Brea's own skills.



Man-eater Humans are disposable puppets for Aya; use their ammo, waste their health and ditch them.

however, boring corridors are sadly a recurring theme and we didn't get so much as a sniff of a birthday candle. Nevertheless, this is a challenging, satisfying shooter that's bound to excite anyone who enjoyed *Syphon Filter* and *Resistance: Retribution*, earlier in PSP's life.

Shaun Curnow



Bossy boots Boss battles are tough and lengthy. Without Overdrive, you won't stand a chance.

PSM3 Verdict

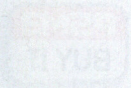


The 3rd Birthday contains...

Torn jeans | DNA meddling | Quantum leaping | Pretty-but-dull heroines

Overall An otherwise ordinary shooter redeemed with that game-changing Overdrive idea.

75



Pixel Junk
Shooter 2



The first thing you notice when you start Pixel Junk Shooter 2 is how much it looks like a classic 1980s arcade game. The pixelated graphics and the simple, yet addictive gameplay are a nod to the golden age of video games. The game is set in a dark, industrial environment where you control a character who can shoot and move. The controls are tight and responsive, making it a pleasure to play. The game is a great example of how a simple idea can be executed so well. It's a game that you can play for hours and not get bored. The graphics are a mix of pixel art and modern 3D models, which gives it a unique look. The sound effects are also well done, adding to the overall experience. Pixel Junk Shooter 2 is a game that is both nostalgic and modern. It's a game that is easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The game is a must-play for anyone who loves a good arcade-style shooter.

The Undergarden

The Undergarden is a game that is both beautiful and terrifying. It's a game that is set in a dark, underground world where you control a character who is trying to survive. The game is a mix of horror and action, and it's a game that is both challenging and rewarding. The graphics are stunning, with a lot of detail and a high level of realism. The sound effects are also excellent, creating a sense of tension and fear. The game is a great example of how a game can be both scary and fun. It's a game that is easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The game is a must-play for anyone who loves a good horror game.



de Blob 2



de Blob 2 is a game that is both fun and challenging. It's a game that is set in a colorful, abstract world where you control a character who is trying to reach the end of the level. The game is a mix of platformer and action, and it's a game that is both easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The graphics are a mix of pixel art and modern 3D models, which gives it a unique look. The sound effects are also well done, adding to the overall experience. de Blob 2 is a game that is both nostalgic and modern. It's a game that is easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The game is a must-play for anyone who loves a good platformer.

Top Spin 4

Top Spin 4 is a game that is both fun and challenging. It's a game that is set in a realistic world where you control a character who is trying to win a tennis match. The game is a mix of sports and action, and it's a game that is both easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The graphics are a mix of pixel art and modern 3D models, which gives it a unique look. The sound effects are also well done, adding to the overall experience. Top Spin 4 is a game that is both nostalgic and modern. It's a game that is easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The game is a must-play for anyone who loves a good sports game.



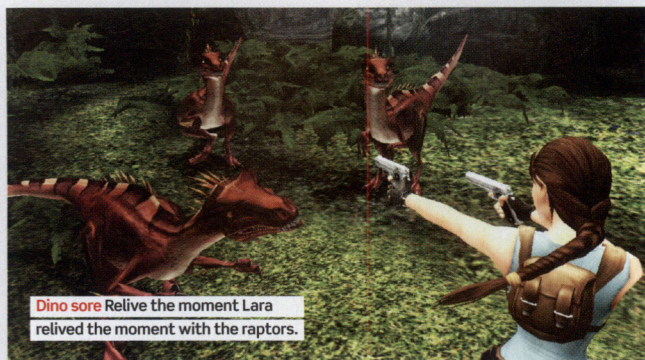
The Tomb Raider Trilogy

The Tomb Raider Trilogy is a game that is both fun and challenging. It's a game that is set in a dark, industrial world where you control a character who is trying to reach the end of the level. The game is a mix of platformer and action, and it's a game that is both easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The graphics are a mix of pixel art and modern 3D models, which gives it a unique look. The sound effects are also well done, adding to the overall experience. The Tomb Raider Trilogy is a game that is both nostalgic and modern. It's a game that is easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The game is a must-play for anyone who loves a good platformer.

Glave Dance

Glave Dance is a game that is both fun and challenging. It's a game that is set in a dark, industrial world where you control a character who is trying to reach the end of the level. The game is a mix of platformer and action, and it's a game that is both easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The graphics are a mix of pixel art and modern 3D models, which gives it a unique look. The sound effects are also well done, adding to the overall experience. Glave Dance is a game that is both nostalgic and modern. It's a game that is easy to pick up and play, but it also has a lot of depth. The game is a must-play for anyone who loves a good platformer.





Dino sore Relive the moment Lara relived the moment with the raptors.

Square Enix | PS3 | Out now

The Tomb Raider Trilogy

PSM3
BUY IT

Three treasures for the price of one

Missed even one of these? Then this disc is worth it. Yet, though *Legend* has been upgraded from PS2 and both it and *Anniversary* have been Hi-Deffed (and there's an XMB theme, developer video diaries and *Home* costumes) the *real* reason is the best of reasons. All these games are fun.

Grave danger

Tomb Raider Legend remains the weakest. The twitchy camera, odd collision detection and intrusive signposting remain, and obviously it's still short with a terrible final boss. Yet between these gaps lies what was, until *Anniversary*, the best *Tomb Raider* since 1997's *Tomb Raider II*.

The improvement in *Anniversary* (the 'reimagining' of the classic original) is glaring. While still not as polished as *Uncharted* – Lara's combat

remains bung, while collisions and cameras are perennial issues – it's atmospheric, rich and pleasingly adventuresome. Whether you get the nods to the original or not, it's also immersive, satisfying and occasionally epic.

Underworld was a graphical step up again, and a great adventure. Still not quite a match for the cheerful solidity of either *Uncharted* game, it's nevertheless a fantastic *Raider* blessed with genuinely stand-out underwater sections. So play this, wonder why more games aren't set in mysterious deeps, and lose yourself in the best-raided tombs since the 1990s.

Steve Williams

PSM3 Verdict

Three big, bouncy adventures for \$50 – plus upgrades. Nice.

88



Bad place *Underworld's* diving section is adventuring at its most atmospheric. It's pretty, too.

THQ | PS3 | Out now

de Blob 2

Red and yellow and pink and green



This can't help but make you happy.

Those bright colours, crisp cartoon graphics and gratifying statements such as 'You Da Blob!' and 'Blobberific!' could put a smile on anyone's face.

You play as Blob – a gelatinous creature who absorbs colour – and it's your job to stop Comrade Black. To do so you must paint your way through Prisma City, restoring life and happiness as you go. This involves plenty of puzzles and tasks, mostly revolving around absorbing different colours to create another (need to be green to flick a switch? Better find some blue and some yellow paint). The main campaign offers local co-op play too, alongside various multiplayer party modes.

It's simplicity is the key. The various challenges wouldn't trouble a child and the levels can get repetitive, but it rarely detracts from the enjoyment. It's great to just switch off and drift away in this wonderfully vivid – and Aussie made! – cartoon world.

Richard Broughton

77

2K | PS3 | Out now

Top Spin 4

Lands just outside the line



A stellar roster of players old and new, fantastic tournaments and stadia, more intuitive controls and more arcade-friendly matchplay mechanics embellish this safe, but worthy, sequel. Players' swings are impressively real – check out Federer's sublime backhand and signature through-the-legs-reverse shot – while sweet animations and a relatively deep single-player campaign, with stat upgrades, prove a hit.

Controls are streamlined after last year's tricky 'risk' shot system, yet bear enough nuances to just retain its sim status over *Virtua Tennis*. Doubles matches with mates prove particularly enjoyable, but the ease with which you return half-decent shots proves a double-edged sword: hardly any strokes hit the net, and there are few unforced errors. The way sprinting and whether or not your pro leaves the ball occurs automatically, beyond your control, grates too. Soon the jaggy-looking nets, poor crowd animations and lack of diverse game modes are hard to ignore. Shame.

Greg MacGregor

78

Sony | PS3 | Out now

PixelJunk Shooter 2

Pilot the perfect puzzler

PSM3
BUY IT



This is a terrific sequel, mixing everything that was great about the original with some inventive tweaks. The premise is identical – pilot your mini craft through liquid-based puzzles, rescuing miners and knobbling nasty things – but the scenarios are fresh and vibrant. The first levels, for instance, see you working through the fleshy innards of a monster – lava is replaced by stomach acid and there are new (and noxious) gases to watch out for.

It's a nice change from the rocky caves of the original. The environments here feel alive, dynamic and satisfyingly squidgy – shoot those intestines and they flex, churning water in realistic waves to show off the impressive physics. Importantly the controls are smooth and elegant too, while the puzzles remain intuitive and challenging.

Add a new competitive online mode (only two players) where you can earn upgrades for your ship and you're looking at another must-buy.

Rob Pearson

87

Atari | PSN | Out now

The Undergarden

Puzzler intrigues and underachieves

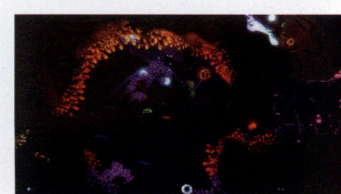
You might find *The Undergarden* remarkably similar to *PixelJunk* in both looks and feel... which, if you're a *PixelJunk* fan at least, is good news. A visually impressive platform puzzler, *The Undergarden* adds to the already growing list of 'ambient' games on PSN. It's in 3D too, if you really want the full acid trip experience.

Floating around like some kind of Pixar reject, your fat alien fairy thing pollinates barren wastelands, leaving them swaying with life even while saving strange creatures and solving puzzles as you go. Well, *maybe* saving them. *The Undergarden* can be annoyingly unclear about your objectives.

Even so, it's very addictive thanks to fantastic sound and looks, while the puzzles (think fruits, pressure pads, trapdoors and cogs, weight, buoyancy and currents etc) can be migraine-inducing. Frame rate stutters are less impressive, and given that blissful looks and motion are a main selling point, that's a big negative.

Jay McGregor

70





THQ | PS3 | Out now

WWE All-Stars

It's Smackdown on smack...



The WWE doesn't even try to pretend that wrestling (sorry, 'Sports Entertainment') is real these days, so why should its games? *WWE All-Stars* is a glorious alternative to the stale, fiddly *Smackdown!* series – this is a world of 15-foot high Stone Cold Stunners and physics-bending spinning Samoan drops. In other words, this is a game that revels in the glitz and the kitsch of modern day WWE – to hell with realism, to hell if bodies can actually bend that way...

WWE All-Stars' mechanics are shallow and samey, allowing for little variety from match to match, and it's positively starved of features compared to *Smackdown!* (the only speciality matches are steel cage and extreme rules variants, and there's no Story mode worthy of the name). But none of that seems to matter when the bell sounds because *WWE All-Stars* is presented with such infectious enthusiasm and exuberance that it can't help but suck your mouth into a smile-shape. It's limited, sure, but this absurd wrestling parody is more WWE than the actual WWE itself. **Alex Dale**

79

EA | PS3 | Out now

Tiger Woods PGA 12

Golf made easy, Tiger

Tiger Woods has had a scratchy year with the clubs in real life, and that tale continues with his latest game, *PGA Tour 12*. Sure, you can now play the US Masters at Augusta National, the world's best golf course for many, (online in real-time if you wish), and through the best selection of real life courses in a game via Move or a pad, but Tiger's game is beginning to look long in the tooth. The visuals don't impress here: there's some nice 3D grass used in the rough but the players are lacking. Stats-based ball lies when you drop an iron shot into the sand aren't befitting of a next-gen golfer either.

The main addition this year is the inclusion of your caddy, who will offer a selection of shots to choose from. Although it makes the game hugely accessible, we found their advice patchy. Still the best golf sim around, but in need of an overhaul.

Greg Macgregor

74



PSM3 Awards

The highs (and lows) of this month's reviews



The I ♥ New York award goes to... **Crisis 2**. We've seen NYC in a million (ish) games, but thanks to the impressive CryEngine 3 graphics technology, this is the first time we really feel like we're there. Ish.

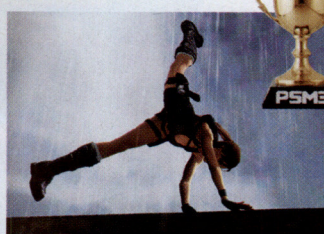
The **Sexy Times** award goes to...



Catherine

Catherine's story of lust and adultery is helped along by some amazing anime cut-scenes, some of which feature, to put it mildly, a bit of 'sauce'. Maybe lock your door when you play this one if you live with other people.

The **Rebirth** award goes to...



Tomb Raider Trilogy

Crystal Dynamics' *Tomb Raider* games have been given a new lease of life thanks to these quality HD remakes. Now all we need are shiny new versions of the original *Raider* games from the classic PSone era.

Hi-Score Table

Tomb Raider Trilogy	p78 88%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	p78 87%
Crisis 2	p64 84%
MS Apocalypse	p74 81%
Catherine	p72 80%
WWE All-Stars	p79 79%
Top Spin 4	p78 78%
De Blob 2	p78 77%
The 3rd Birthday	p76 75%
Tiger Woods PGA 12	p79 74%
The Undergarden	p78 70%
Shift 2 Unleashed	p68 66%
PS Move Heroes	p70 58%



PSM3 Recommends

The best games from the last few months



Bulletstorm

EA | PS3

"Brash, unique and fun. It refreshes old school values to shame most modern shooters. The devs have distilled the joy of games into a glorious and knowing FPS adventure."

PSM3 Rating 91% - Issue 19



Homefront

THQ | PS3

"Its major point of difference from its plethora of peers is a roubust, well-written world that offers boundless opportunities for sequels and tie-ins."

PSM3 Rating 80% - Issue 18



Yakuza 4

Sega | PS3

"Characterful, amusing, violent and intriguing. If you're bored of serious concrete jungle games, this could be the slap in the eyes with a wet traffic cone you've been waiting for."

PSM3 Rating 91% - Issue 19

Online Play

Reviews News Play DLC Home

The BIG review

A world of fun awaits in **LittleBigPlanet 2**

Millions of levels, smart community features, brilliant co-op

Info-burst



Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule
Players 1-4
Modes Co-op story | Endless community levels
Media Molecule serves up another slice of Sackboy action, and gives you way more creation tools than the original game. The result? A huge amount of levels devised by the *LBP* community that look fantastic and are a joy to play with. Most of the time, anyway.

What a fantastic set of tools there are on offer in *LittleBigPlanet 2*. The customisable skill set at your disposal means that not only can you create that complicated platform game you've been working on – in your mind – for a decade, but it also means the most creative levels in *LBP2* aren't actually made by the developers themselves.

At the time of writing, there are 3.6 million levels out there. Some are absolutely awful but there are lots

of genius ones. And thanks to a new search system and Media Molecule choosing their favourites, you no longer have to wade through other people's crap.

In terms of connecting with others, it's never been easier in the *LittleBigPlanet* universe. Friends – and strangers – can jump in and out of your game if you like. It's worth noting that some fools may hold up your progress as they're too busy dancing or slapping each other than heading down the level link portal.

But you can kick said grievers or, if you prefer to go solo while trying out new stages, you can flick a switch in the menu which will auto-reject unwanted Sack-people.

LBP2's online mode expands your playing experience exponentially, providing incredible value and demonstrating that the online gaming world isn't just about headshots and scoring goals.

Want to know more? Check out all *LBP2*'s online features by visiting <http://lbp.me/> and signing in

Variety is the spice of LBP2's life

A wide range of levels and creations will keep you hooked for ages



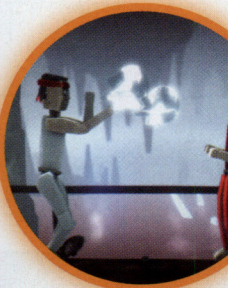
Tutorials

You'll have lots of levels at your disposal but some clever folk have created tutorials to show you how to make snazzy cinematics too. Perfect for creating that *Star Wars* homage you've been craving.



Mario

Folk don't seem to be content with Mario being everywhere already so they've come up with a vast number of homages to the Italian plumber. Some are eerily well done, but most are fan-boy garbage.



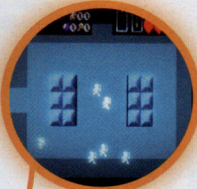
Racing

There are lots of top down and side-scrolling racers on offer. It's amazing how many variations on the car there are too – you can race a variety of animals, objects, and... well, anything.



Shooters

Thanks to the Controlinator and the ability to use the camera into a mock first-person view, you can now make a variety of FPS games. The community has already created plenty.



Zelda

Possibly the most impressive retro remake – and there are plenty of them – is this *Zelda* creation. It even has the theme tune – of sorts – packed in there. Splendid.



Fighting games

It's not just another retro game being praised, it's the fact that fighting games like this even exist in *LBP2*. Of course, the controls are often woolly but let's see you make something more impressive.

Odd concepts

Dip your toes into the millions of levels on offer and you're bound to find a weird one that is also compelling. This food-eating one is really addictive for reasons we can't fully explain.

3 things you need to know NOW

Where to go to get the best out of your game



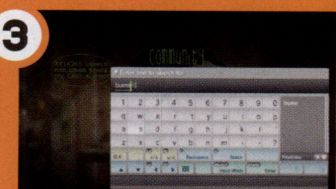
Cool Levels

This is where the pick of the community levels are housed. Here you'll find the top rated stages from around the world.



MM Picks

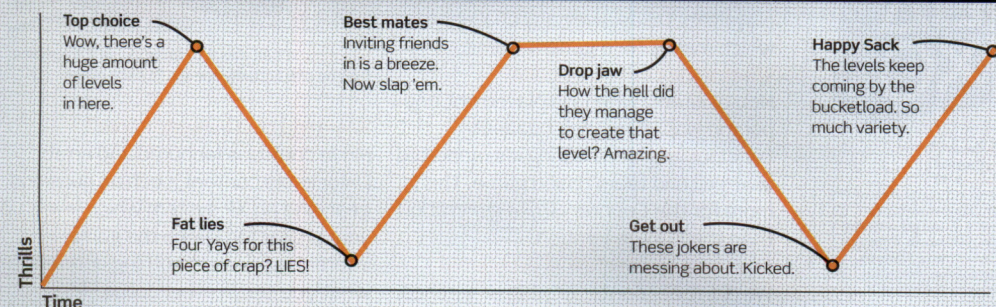
You know you're getting a bloody good level when the developers of the game are choosing their favourites.



Text search

The place to go if you want to search for specific levels. Feel like a racing game? Then type it here. You'll then be presented with a filtered selection.

Online Thrill-o-meter



Q&A

What's it like for beginners?

Solid. There's so much content to play either alone or with fellow sack-person enthusiasts, and finding levels is super-simple.

Are there any technical problems?

Aside from a few lag issues *LBP2* is fairly robust. The main problem comes from playing a stage where some half-wit forgot to plug a gap which you somehow get trapped in.

Anything else I should know?

You'll occasionally find the odd, shall we say, 'controversial' level. There are still morons out there who think racist/sextist/homophobic behaviour is big and clever. Thankfully, you can report the levels and they'll be quickly destroyed.

PSM3's Top Online Games

25 of the best games to play online

FIRST PERSON SHOOTER

1 Battlefield BC2
The most intricate and varied warzone on PS3. This multi-player sandbox is a joy to visit with a squad of friends.

- 2) Modern Warfare 2
- 3) Killzone 2
- 4) Call Of Duty: World At War
- 5) Borderlands

ACTION / ADVENTURE

1 Uncharted 2
Looks stunning, and the climbing mechanics in versus play and co-op lend a fresh feel. More accessible than MW2.

- 2) LittleBigPlanet 2
- 3) Red Dead Redemption
- 4) GTA IV
- 5) Warhawk

SPORT

1 FIFA 11
Some prefer the 'ping pong' feel of previous games, but this is still accessible, tactical fun – just more of a fight.

- 2) Skate 3
- 3) Madden NFL 10
- 4) PES 2011
- 5) NBA 2K10

RACER

1 Colin McRae DiRT 2
Brilliant, lag-free online racing with an online career mode that feeds into your main profile. The king – until GRID 2...

- 2) Burnout Paradise
- 3) Race Driver GRID
- 4) WipeOut HD
- 5) ModNation Racers

BEAT 'EM UP

1 Super Street Fighter IV
The best fighting game we've ever seen, now with improved online options.

- 2) Soulcalibur IV
- 3) UFC 2010
- 4) Tekken 6
- 5) Super Street Fighter HD Remix

Don't agree? Let us know on Facebook!

More Reviews

We rate the rest of this month's online games



Nailing it If you learn the tracks in the offline mode you'll have no problem racing online.

Nail'd

REVIEW We'd rather get hammered...

What's it like for beginners?

As long as you've learned the tracks in the offline career mode, beginners will be in good stead for when they head online. Even the unlockable performance mods won't disrupt what should be a level playing field.

What's the community like?

A few days after release, servers are sparse. Getting half a dozen people in one race is an achievement and an average of two drop out because of boredom. There's little to bring you back after your first taste.

Are there any technical problems?

The races remain fast and we saw no lag. However, once you've set up a race, you'll have to quit out to change it. Courses are so big you'll rarely see the opposition anyway.

Anything else I should know?

There's little incentive to play online, no real progression or rewards. Plus some of the race 'mutators' turn events into a farce and close fought competition is non-existent. Online feels like a tacked-on feature to a low-rent racer.

Shaun Curnow

Info-burst



Pub Deep Silver
Dev Techland
Players 1-12
Fast and frantic ATV and Motorbike arcade racer that borrows heavily from the likes of Pure and Motorstorm by offering high-flying and over the top courses for players to compete on.

Modern Combat: Domination

REVIEW Quick, fun, cheap, generic

Info-burst



Pub Gameloft
Dev Gameloft
Players 1-16
Cheap and cheerful online FPS with added Move support. 16 players square off in familiar online FPS modes across six different maps. Ability to progress and unlockables keep the game interesting, to a point.

What's it like for beginners?

Simple, anyone who's played any type of FPS before won't have any problems picking this up. Controls are standard for an FPS and movement feels familiar. Unfortunately, its pick-up-and-playability takes away any challenge, which makes for a generic game.

What's the community like?

Non-existent. When we played not one person was using their headset. Disappointing considering it's marketed as a skill and team based game. This is more for the Counter-Strike generation than the COD generation.

Are there any technical problems?

We didn't encounter any lag or glitches. The game runs very smoothly.



So ronery It's all about team work, so it's a shame that no one actually speaks to each other.

Anything else I should know?

Move control is laboured and erratic. Unlockable content, such as guns and gear, and an XP system which levels up your character, keeps the game interesting. Expect nothing different to what you see in other online FPS'.

Jay McGregor



Network News

Beta trials, dev Q&As... the future of online now



"World Of Warcraft on PS3? It's entirely possible"

The BIG story

DCU Online devs, SOE, talk exclusively about subscription pricing, extensive DLC and the possibility of WOW on PlayStation

PSM3: Just how accommodating were Sony with your requirements for PSN, with subscription prices and server specifications, etc?

SOE: Well, I think the subscription model is something new for Sony and it's something new for PlayStation customers. But the thing I typically do is to equate it to DLC.

We're going to be delivering monthly content - new iconic characters are going to be coming into the game every month with quests, and both heroes and villains will be encountering these new characters, so if you think of it more as monthly DLC, then I think it'll be a little bit more accepted among gamers.

PSM3: So, how long do you see the lifespan of *DC Universe Online* being?

SOE: As long as we can keep it going! I mean, the plan right now is to take a subscription fee and provide the content that players expect. You get what you pay for. You're paying a subscription, so we're going to give you content.

There's so much content that we can add to this game. Seventy-five years of DC comics - we have 85 iconics in here - and there's literally hundreds more that we can bring into the story. We have the luxury of working with some of the best writers - Geoff Johns and Marv Wolfman. They have this incredible ability to link all

these characters into a scenario that makes sense for you as the player.

PSM3: Now that you've paved the way for MMOs on consoles, do you think we're going to see even more MMOs on PS3?

SOE: It's very similar to when first-person-shooters first came to

consoles - it was an experience that we'd had as PC gamers, but when it finally came to consoles it was a new thing and everyone jumped on it. We, as PC gamers, have been enjoying MMOs for a very long time. We've been having this social experience, having this epic sized world that we can enjoy and now console players can join in on that. It's a very popular genre, and people are really going to like the mechanics of it.

PSM3: In your opinion, do you think we'll ever see something like *World Of Warcraft* running on a PS3?

SOE: Not something that complex. I mean, if you wanted to look specifically at *World Of Warcraft*, the game is very, very complex. You'd have to design a game from the ground up, like we've done with *DCU*. You'd have to have that in mind when you were designing the game. But it's entirely possible.



Super content You'll get lots of new content for your money.

PSM3 Presents Upgrade

Tech. Blu-ray. Gadgets. Your PS3. Only Better.

TOP 3 PADS



DualShock 3
Good for Everything. It's pricey, but shames many cheaper, third-party pads.

SFIV FightPad
Good for Fighting games. Features a custom d-pad and six-button layout.

MW2 Combat Pad
Good for Shooters. Features sharper triggers and more resistant sticks.

TOP 3 HEADSETS



Sony Official Wireless Headset
Superb sound quality with on-screen notifications.

Turtle Beach PX 5
This programmable headset leads the superb Turtle Beach pack.

Gioteck EX-02 Next Gen Headset
Good sound quality, but a little bit cumbersome.

TOP 3 EXTRAS



EyeToy
Good for video chat and makes a handy room mic.

Play TV
Watch and record freeview TV on your PS3.

Sony Blu-ray Disc Remote Control
Makes PS3's Blu-ray controls much simpler.

How SOE made PS3's first massively multiplayer game

Sony's Tony Jones explains the challenges involved in making MMOs on PS3 a reality

“The UI that we’ve come up with here is very intuitive”

“When the PlayStation 3 was being developed, the team behind *DC Universe Online* actually came to us, Sony Online Entertainment, and asked us what hardware was it going to take to make MMO gaming possible for this console. So we worked hand-in-hand for that part of the development and I think that’s what really made the developers think, ‘Okay, if we’re going to have hardware that’s capable of this, we’re going to need the software to match, right?’ And that set that train in motion towards what’s going to be the first MMO on PS3.”

Taking control

The most challenging part was to bring the functionality of an MMO to the input device that you’re dealing with on a console. Typically, you would have a PC with a huge input device (the keyboard and the mouse), so we had to simplify things a little bit – you don’t want a burdensome controller experience where you’re holding four buttons trying to get your character to jump over a wall. I think the UI that we’ve come up with here is very intuitive and very comfortable.

Another new challenge we faced was keeping servers up and running. I mean, MMO players on PC are more accustomed to seeing messages that say, ‘Okay, the servers are coming down.’ But if I’m a PlayStation player

and that thing’s plugged into the wall, it had better be working, right?

Early on in the PS3 beta there was some sort of bug – I don’t even know what triggered it – but it would cause your machine to freeze, and you had to literally restart it. That was happening to people when we first started the beta, maybe every four to five hours. By the termination of beta we were running machines for 60 to 70 hours and there was no bug at all, so it was ironing out little things like that – little triggers that you can’t anticipate until the game is actually up and running.”

Tony Jones

Tony Jones is the community manager at Sony Online Entertainment in Austin, Texas.



QUICK TECH TIPS If you’re running out of memory, check for old installs by using the Game Data Utility at the

GROUP TEST

The best peripherals to unleash your inner action hero

Lock and load, we're going in...

John Rambo, John McClane, John Matrix, John Wayne and... um... John Farnham? Okay, with the possible exception of that last one, the machine gun toting exploits of these iconic action heroes has inspired us all to indulge in a little combat-rolling, grenade-tossing make believe at

some point. Yes, we're as guilty as the next person of a little commando self-indulgence, and proud of it. Thankfully, these days it's easier than ever to play action hero. Just take your PS3 and add some of this gear.

PlayStation Move shooting attachment

Price: \$29.95 RRP

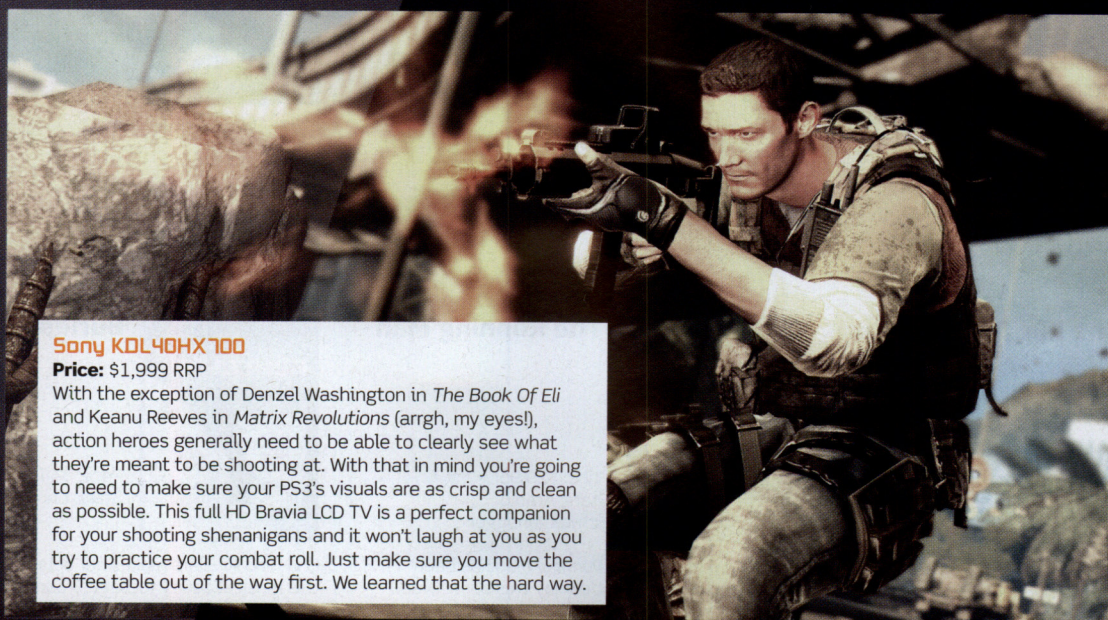
What happens when your PlayStation Move sharp shooter suddenly runs out of ammo? You whip out your trusty side arm of course. It's faster than reloading and might just save your life. Okay, we know it doesn't quite work like that, but you really need the matching set nonetheless. The PlayStation Move shooting attachment enables you to hold your Move controller like a handgun, avoiding any of that clumsy aiming that's entirely unbecoming of a budding action hero. Yippee-ki-yay!



PlayStation Move Sharp Shooter

Price \$79.95 RRP

No super-soldier is complete without a reliable firearm. And using any other controller to mow down wave after wave of anonymous goons just isn't as satisfying as it is with the PlayStation Move Sharp Shooter. With increased accuracy as well as the added authenticity that obviously comes with looking down a gun barrel, dodging enemy fire and taking headshots has never been this thrilling. It doesn't matter if you're taking the fight to an invading alien hoard or neutralising the latest terrorist threat, your inner action man will thank you.



Sony KDL40HX700

Price: \$1,999 RRP

With the exception of Denzel Washington in *The Book Of Eli* and Keanu Reeves in *Matrix Revolutions* (arrgh, my eyes!), action heroes generally need to be able to clearly see what they're meant to be shooting at. With that in mind you're going to need to make sure your PS3's visuals are as crisp and clean as possible. This full HD Bravia LCD TV is a perfect companion for your shooting shenanigans and it won't laugh at you as you try to practice your combat roll. Just make sure you move the coffee table out of the way first. We learned that the hard way.

top of the XMB's games column. You can use emoticons in PS3's built-in chat by pressing # on your keypad.

BLU-RAY

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1



Or, *Harry Potter Seven: Part 1*. We're really into heavy Potterphile territory here – in fact, newbies to the franchise will find this latest entry utterly bewildering. For the rest of us, this is a sound entry into the series, following Harry, Ron and Hermione as they track down bits of Voldemort's soul in a world that's all but disintegrated into total wizardly war. While the exposition-heavy plot moves with a twisty, turny pace, there's simply so much of it that it can feel disorientating. Nonetheless, a wonderful sense of unease pervades throughout; as the villains get more villainous and the kids get more, well, post-pubescent, the child-like wonder of *The Philosopher's Stone* will feel like a distant memory.

Verdict ●●●●



Disc Details
Release: Out Now
Price: \$49.95
Discs: 2
Cert: M
Year: 2010
Director: David Yates
Stars: Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint, Ralph Fiennes, Alan Rickman

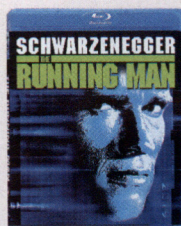


The King's Speech

Price: \$49.95
Stars: Colin Firth

This excellent British drama was so meticulously put together, the Best Picture category at this year's Academy Awards was a no-contest-everybody-go-home waste of time. Colin Firth plays the stuttering King George VI with staunch British aplomb, Geoffrey Rush is heartbreakingly good as his Australian speech therapist, and the entire production drips with detail and finesse. Despite all this, it probably won't linger too long in your memory – it's just too perfect.

Verdict ●●●●



The Running Man

Price: \$29.95
Stars: Arnold Schwarzenegger

"Finally!" We cried. "*The Running Man* has been released on Blu-ray!" But our joy was short-lived. We were remembering *The Running Man* with rose-tinted glasses. Sacrilege, you say? You'd be surprised at the amount of exposition you have to sit through before Arnie starts busting heads proper – and once he does, the only appeal lies with awkward eighties kitsch.

Verdict ●●



Burlesque

Price: \$44.95
Stars: Christina Aguilera

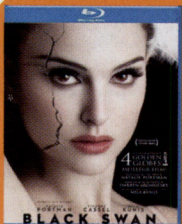
Christina Aguilera makes her acting debut in this musical oddity focused around a small-town girl's transition from rural nowhere to the glitz and glam of a cliché-ridden burlesque club. Cher, who can't really move her face anymore, plays the owner. While the elements are all there – particularly Aguilera's singing voice – the dialogue is too leaden, and the tone too sentimental, to leave a lasting impact.

Verdict ●●

Name that film

““We're police officers! We're not trained to handle this kind of violence.”

Black Swan



Disc Details
Release: 1 June
Price: TBC
Discs: TBC
Cert: TBC
Year: 2010
Director: Darren Aronofsky
Stars: Natalie Portman, Mila Kunis, Vincent Cassel, Barbara Hershey, Winona Ryder

Darren Aronofsky's psychosexual opus will continue to divide audiences with its unapologetically sensational narrative and visual excess. Yet, taken as a melodrama, it's utterly compelling; Natalie Portman's portrayal of a decent into madness hasn't been so well realized since Catherine Deneuve played an innocent waif in *Repulsion* (watch it). Perhaps it's the wide-eyed gaze, perhaps it's the psychotic sex fantasies, or perhaps it's just because she's so physically committed - this is Portman's film, and she deserves every accolade. Just don't go reading too far into the dodgy gender politics; you'll get pissed off very quickly.

Verdict ●●●●



Tangled

Price: \$44.95
Stars: Mandy Moore

This surprisingly fresh Disney musical turns the 'Rapunzel' fairytale on its head by way of dry humour and stunning spectacle, and thankfully avoids the smug pop-culture references that seem to be all the rage nowadays. While the somewhat earnest songs might dissuade some, this is definitely worth a look for anyone who fondly remembers Disney's glory days of the early nineties.

Verdict ●●●●●



Love and Other Drugs

Price: \$44.95
Stars: Anne Hathaway

Predictable rom-com sees Jake Gyllenhaal's smooth-talking Viagra salesman fall in lust with Anne Hathaway's kooky, independent artist. Although a few curveballs are thrown our way (including a well-handled depiction of living with Parkinson's Disease), this begins and ends as you would expect.

Verdict ●●●●



Jackass 3D

Price: \$49.95
Stars: Johnny Knoxville

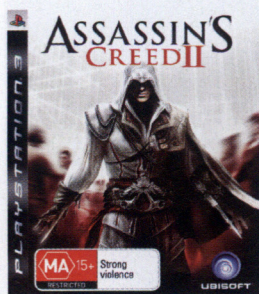
The third in the vomit-soaked series sees the boys put themselves through a myriad of painful and nauseating experiments in the name of... excess? Mortality? We're reading too much into it? You won't notice if you're not 3D equipped though, as this remains true to the rough n' readiness of the original MTV series. And we still question if there's anyone out there who wants to see a poo volcano in three dimensions.

Verdict ●●●

PS3 Top Forty



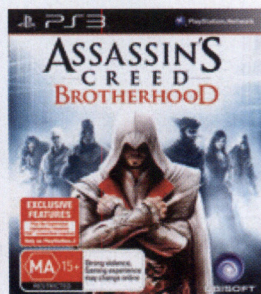
The ultimate buyer's guide to PSM3's favourite PS3, PSN and PSP titles. If it's here, it belongs in your collection



Assassin's Creed 2

"The best open world game since GTA/IV. It corrects all of the original game's aberrations and then some."

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft



Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood

"A staggering amount of side-missions, secrets and hidden stuff round out this adventure."

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft



Batman: Arkham Asylum

"An incredible adventure and the best superhero game ever. If you don't enjoy it you must be mad."

Pub Namco Bandai
Dev Rocksteady



Bayonetta

"Sexy, epic and wonderfully ridiculous, this is also one helluva slick action game, and then some."

Pub Sega
Dev Platinum Games



BioShock

"The stunning dystopian original still has one of the most cohesive and memorable worlds ever committed to console."

Pub 2K Games
Dev Irrational Games



Dead Rising 2

"It's rare to see a big budget franchise that has a true point of difference. For that reason, we're big fans."

Pub THQ
Dev Capcom



Dead Space 2

"Masterful scares underpin wild action; a polished and worthy sequel. Just don't play with the lights off."

Pub EA Games
Dev Visceral Games



Demon's Souls

"A hardcore classic, so you're going to need some serious skills. Tough but fair, and utterly absorbing."

Pub Sony
Dev From Software



Dragon Age 2

"Striking and colourful compared to *Dragon Age: Origins*' drab brownness, this is a confident game and an exciting franchise."

Pub EA
Dev BioWare



Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion

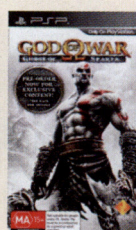
"This is one of the most incredible open-ended experiences you can have on a console."

Pub Bethesda
Dev Bethesda

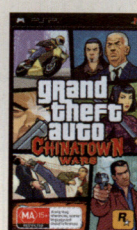
PSP Top 10



Final Fantasy Tactics
"Epic, tactical and polished beyond belief. This will definitely work your brain."



God of War: Ghost of Sparta
"A masterful manipulation of the PSP."



GTA Chinatown Wars
"Substantial, hilarious and absolutely huge. A terrific addition to the GTA series."



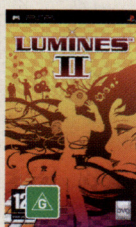
GTA: Vice City Stories
"One of the best games on PSP. A genuine classic and it'll last you ages."



GripShift
"This is a ridiculously addictive puzzle game masquerading as a superbly responsive driving game. Top fun."



LocoRoco 2
"It's simple to pick up and play and equally hard to put down. The most enjoyable PSP game we've played."



Lumines 2
"Games like this are what your PSP was made for. Hypnotic puzzle action that you'll play for ages."



Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker
Metal Gear Solid shrunk down, with streamlined controls and a million other mechanics? Yes."



Ridge Racer
"It's like they were made for each other. Ridge Racer on PSP is the best way to play this classic series."



Tekken: Dark Resurrection
"Home-console quality fighting that doesn't hurt your thumbs."



BioShock 2
"A lovingly crafted, carefully constructed masterpiece of narrative richness and smart game mechanics. Brilliant."

Pub 2K Games
Dev 2K Marin



Bulletstorm
"Refreshes old-school values to shame more modern shooters. Why can't all FPS heavyweights be this fun?"

Pub EA
Dev People Can Fly



Burnout Paradise
"Flawed in structure but magnificent to play, Paradise is within touching distance of being absolutely vital."

Pub EA
Dev Criterion



Castlevania: Lords of Shadow
"A glorious epic with incredible combat and an involving story. This is how to do a reboot."

Pub Konami
Dev Mercury Steam



Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2
"Sublime in single, co-op and multiplayer. An incredible package. One of the best shooters ever."

Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward



Fallout 3
"Imaginative, epic and brilliant, but not for instant-fix arcade gamers. Continues the tradition of great Fallout games."

Pub Bethesda
Dev Bethesda



Far Cry 2
"Challenging, immersive safari shooter with liberating tactical freedom. Plus, it's so damn green!"

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Ubisoft



FIFA 11
"Effortlessly simulates soccer's rich complexity. FIFA 11 feels far more physical than its previous instalments."

Pub EA
Dev EA



Final Fantasy XIII
"It's still impossible to regard this as anything less than wondrously epic... there might never be another game like it."

Pub Ubisoft
Dev Square-Enix



God of War III
"This is an epic that pushes the limits of the PS3, and the finest action game you'll get to play for a long time."

Pub Sony
Dev Sony



01 Braid
"Complex and beautiful; one of the best puzzle games ever."



02 BBC2 Vietnam
"The score reflects the value – a must-buy for all BBC2 fans."



03 Peggle
"Ludicrously addictive and cute. This will make you happy."



04 Warhawk
"The perfect showcase for PSN. Rewarding and exciting."



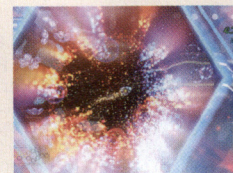
05 PixelJunk Shooter
"Satisfying and elegant to play – another superb PixelJunk game."



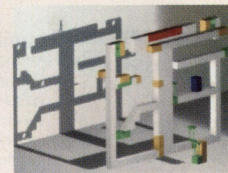
11 Plants Vs Zombies
"Would be PSN's best strategy game – but not at this price."



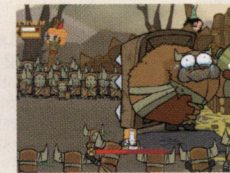
12 Stacking
"The kind of game PSN was made for – inventive, charming and fun."



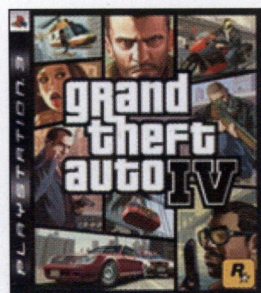
13 Blast Factor
"Similar to Geometry Wars, but has some neat tricks."



14 Echochrome II
"The presentation may be dry but is right for the smart gameplay."



15 Castle Crashers
"Fit-to-bursting with fun, Castle Crashers is a rare PSN treat."



Grand Theft Auto IV

"Imperfect, but the most focused, funny and compelling GTA ever. An utter joy."

Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar



GTA: Episodes from Liberty City

"We suggest you take the opportunity to delve back into Liberty City quicksmart..."

Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar



Heavy Rain

"The narrative takes precedence over everything else, but the overall experience is hugely gripping."

Pub Sony
Dev Quantic Dream



Killzone 2

"A bit too short and lacking in context, but it's action-packed and more technically dazzling than any other PS3 title."

Pub Sony
Dev Guerrilla



LittleBigPlanet

"The game PS3 was waiting for – fun, richly creative and truly fresh. The best toybox you'll ever get to play with."

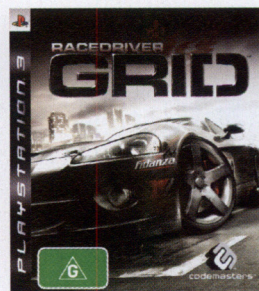
Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule



The Orange Box

"Five brilliant games in one box, but unfortunately an imperfect port of a perfect package. Still, it's great value."

Pub EA
Dev Valve



Race Driver: GRID

"Action-packed, content-heavy and stunningly beautiful, GRID sets a new standard for racing games. And then some."

Pub Namco Bandai
Dev Codemasters



Ratchet and Clank: A Crack in Time

"Massive, rewarding and funny – this is all you would expect plus some cute new twists."

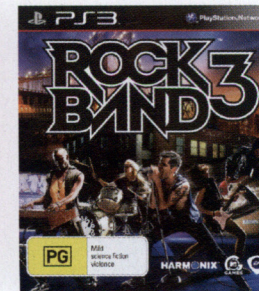
Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac Games



Red Dead Redemption

"Bottom line – you must own and play Red Dead Redemption. It is as simple as that."

Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar San Diego



Rock Band 3

"The best music game around. Crafted from years of experience by a studio who strive to celebrate music."

Pub EA
Dev Harmonix



06 Lara Croft ATGOL

"Fantastic online co-op and some seriously inventive puzzles."



07 Monkey Island 2 SE: LR

"A lovingly crafted remake of the classic adventure."



08 Battlefield 1943

"A polished multiplayer shooter that comes in at a bargain price."



09 Ratchet & Clank: QFB

"Four more hours of the classic TOD? Frankly, this is hard to fault."



10 Sam & Max: TDP

"Great value, if stubbornly old school and a little obscure."



15 Scott Pilgrim VTW

"Great retro scrapper. Superb in co-op but can drag when solo."



17 Street Fighter 2 HD

"Glory-era SF that will delight the nostalgists among you."



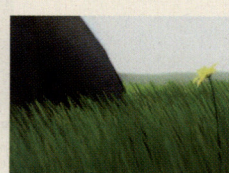
18 Tekken: DR

"DR is an incredibly complete package for a PSN game."



19 Joe Danger

"Innovative and deceptively deep. Another PSN masterpiece."



20 Flower

"Half art installation, half game, but an exquisite addition to PSN."



LittleBigPlanet 2

"Richer, yet more accessible – builds on everything LPB did so superbly. You'll still be playing in years to come."

Pub Sony
Dev Media Molecule



Mass Effect 2

"Mass Effect 2 is unrivalled. It's an adventure you're unlikely to forget, and even less likely to put down after its climax."

Pub EA
Dev BioWare



Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots

"A richly-layered masterpiece, but resolving the series' epic history takes its emotional toll."

Pub Konami
Dev Koj Productions



NBA 2K11

"A top-tier sports game, NBA 2K11 gives and gives, only asking one thing in return: that you give back."

Pub 2K
Dev Visual Concepts



Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit

"The more socially you play, the better it gets. A stage on which to enjoy the real draw – others."

Pub EA
Dev Criterion



Skate 3

"Above all, few games offer such liberating, deep and rewarding controls as Skate 3 – the most vibrant urban canvas yet."

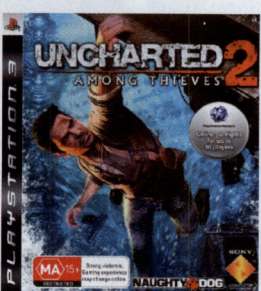
Pub EA
Dev EA Black Box



Super Street Fighter IV

"If you're one of the converted then you already know this is the new Holy Book"

Pub THQ
Dev Capcom



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

"The best looking, most lovingly polished, rip roaring adventure on PS3. Worth buying a PS3 for."

Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog



Vanquish

"A wonderful shooter with an addictive mechanic that makes its rivals feel slow. Too bad it's a bit short."

Pub Sega
Dev Platinum Games



Yakuza 4

"Characterful, amusing, violent and intriguing: Yakuza 4 is excellent, anarchic fun. The antithesis of serious."

Pub Sega
Dev CS1 Team



WALL OF SHOTS

The 25 best planets to mine in Mass Effect 2

Andy Kelly

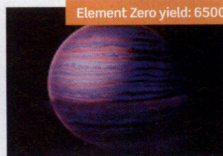
SCANNING Probing the galaxy for minerals



Pub EA
Dev BioWare
FYI PS3 | 2011
Mass Effect 2 is a rich and absorbing sci-fi RPG set in our own Milky Way galaxy. The discovery of faster-than-light travel has allowed humanity to join a vast galactic community of intelligent alien races. There are heaps of secrets to uncover and worlds to explore.



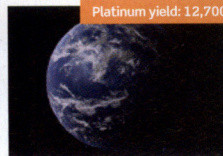
► Love it or hate it, mining is essential to getting the best endings in *Mass Effect*. Rare minerals are used to upgrade the Normandy to make the suicide mission a little less, ah, suicidal. The problem is, there are loads of planets but only a few minerals – an issue we'll now solve...



Element Zero yield: 6500

Mine... Preying Mouth

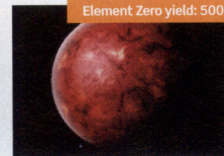
Eagle nebula > Relic system
This ominous gas giant is known as the Bermuda Triangle of the Terminus systems. Ships regularly go missing without explanation, but don't let a little thing like that stop you gathering the Element Zero.



Platinum yield: 12,700

Mine... 2175 Aeia

Rosetta nebula > Alpha Draconis system
Shepard's scans reveal that this previously unexplored planet is in the habitable zone of its white dwarf star. It has surface water and may support life, but for now, get the Platinum.



Element Zero yield: 5000

Mine... Caleston

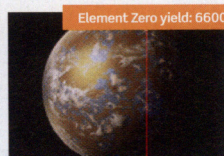
Caleston rift > Balor system
The Citadel reckon the strange life forms on this moon are endangered, but that doesn't stop the fact that a meteor strike left behind lots of Element Zero. Sorry, guys, but we're going to probe away.



Platinum yield: 15,500

Mine... Rothla

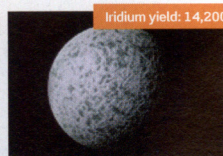
Krogan DMZ > Dranek system
This once-great planet has been fractured, allegedly during a weapons experiment, and there are rumours that it was used by Turian scientists to breed biotic Krogan warriors. It's a good source of Platinum, though.



Element Zero yield: 6600

Mine... Etamis

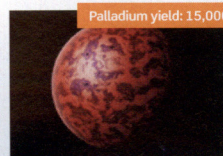
Hawking Eta cluster > Schwarzschild system
Now a post-apocalyptic wasteland, Etamis was once home to advanced cultures but was left in tatters after being attacked by kinetic weapons. Now a great place for Element Zero.



Iridium yield: 14,200

Mine... Agila

Hourglass nebula > Ploitar system
The temperature's nice, but this dwarf planet is a bit sparse. All the Alumina means it isn't very dense and that gravity doesn't have much pull. There is, however, plenty of precious Iridium to be found.



Palladium yield: 15,000

Mine... Aequitas

Minos wasteland > Fortis system
Hot springs were found in Aequitas' polar ice caps, and the water from them is now worth a lot for its medicinal properties. All well and good, but it's the Palladium you should be interested in.



Platinum yield: 14,500

Mine... Lorek

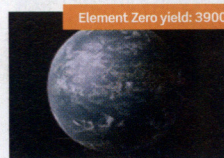
Omega nebula > Fathar system
Lorek has a peculiar climate, which switches from hot on one side to cold and snowy on the other. It seems to suit the Batarians just fine, though – they have more than four million representatives living there.



Platinum yield: 10,000

Mine... Venus

Local cluster > Sol system
Extreme heat and dangerous gases make Venus uninhabitable. But the dense atmosphere is perfect for aerostat colonies, and 800 people now live in orbit. The planet is especially rich in Platinum.



Element Zero yield: 3900

Mine... Yamm

Nubian expanse > Kalabsha system
Yamm is pretty hostile, despite the fact that it's almost entirely covered in water. Days last for 69 Earth hours, during which temperatures can rise to 127°. Native life includes algae that's harvested as a biofuel.



Palladium yield: 13,900

Mine... Gotha

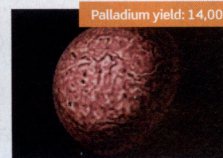
Far rim > Dhiolen system
Any visitors to this dwarf planet have to withstand high temperatures, carbon dioxide, ethane and Geths. Palladium is plentiful, though, and there's a rumour that natural diamonds can be found.



Palladium yield: 17,500

Mine... Taitus

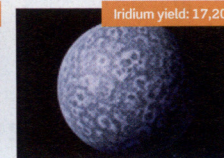
Caleston rift > Talava system
A desert-like place, but the manageable temperatures mean some unsavoury Turian characters operate on Taitus. It's also known as a refuge for escapees of nearby Mairium's prisons.



Palladium yield: 14,000

Mine... Ker

Hades nexus > Hekate system
Ker may be barren, but its mild atmosphere makes it an attractive prospect for slavers and crime lords, who use it as a bolt hole. Registered residents are all of the microscopic variety, though.



Iridium yield: 17,200

Mine... Gregas

Eagle nebula > Imir system
It's far flung and unwelcoming, but Gregas offers a rich bounty of Iridium to dedicated miners. The planet is much more forgiving in the summer, when the frozen methane and nitrogen start to melt.



Platinum yield: 13,700

Mine... Odasst

Ismar frontier > Elysta system
Odasst has a history of bad behaviour – the Council sent a Spectre there 43 years ago when local companies were reported to be selling Platinum to pirates. The heavy metal is now mined more legally.



Iridium yield: 13,500

Mine... Laban

Rosetta nebula > Enoch system
The final remnants of the ancient civilisation almost wiped out on Joab have been found here. The planet's rich layer of Iridium, which you're now trying to mine, is the leftover debris of their last shelters.



Iridium yield: 14,400

Mine... Maskawa

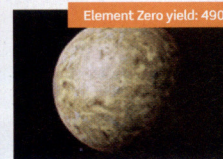
Caleston rift > Yakawa system
One of Maskawa's main features is the large Volus university – the planet's environment is quite similar to that of their home world, Irune. Terminus pirates kidnap lecturers and students for ransom money.



Element Zero yield: 4200

Mine... Ekuna

Phoenix Massing nebula > Salahiell system
The Council gave Ekuna to the Elcor, despite pleas by the Quarrians to make it their home world. The high gravity suits Elcor biology, and there are now two million of them there.



Element Zero yield: 4900

Mine... Capek

Titan nebula > Haskins system
It's not surprising there are no official settlements here – the environment is inhospitable. Temperatures soar, there's no water, and hydrogen and ethane gases abound. Still, there is plenty of Element Zero for you here.



Palladium yield: 10,000

Mine... Pluto

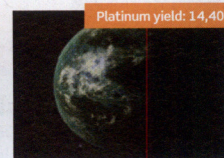
Local cluster > Sol system
Notable because an orbiting object turned out to be the legendary Charon Relay encased in ice – this then allowed humanity to travel beyond their system. Pluto is also rich in Palladium.



Platinum yield: 17,400

Mine... Boro

Pylos nebula > Satent system
The threat of Terminus pirates hangs over Boro like a bad smell. The planet is inhabited by a fairly new Volus group, who the pirates offered to "protect". Not fooled, the locals asked the Turians for help instead.



Platinum yield: 14,400

Mine... Watson

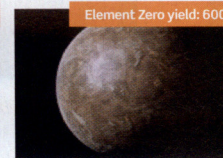
Sigurd's Cradle > Skepsis system
There was a political row over who would get to colonise this Earth-like planet: America, China or Europe. The Reykjavik Compromise resolved that all three would get equal rights to its rich Platinum reserves.



Platinum yield: 20,000

Mine... Trident

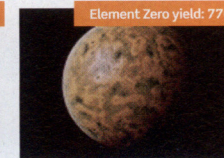
Hades nexus > Hoplos system
This water world is overrun with humans but hosts heaps of other species too. Sadly, the planet is also home to morally confused companies who are ruining it. No, the subtle metaphor isn't lost on us, either.



Element Zero yield: 6000

Mine... Zada Ban

Shrike Abyssal > Xe Cha system
Element Zero, sure, but Zada Ban also has nasty radioactive dust storms. And there's the mystery of the 50,000-year-old mine that went into disuse for no apparent reason. How very Marie Celeste.



Element Zero yield: 7700

Mine... Daratar

Hourglass nebula > Faryar system
Particularly good for Element Zero fanciers, this is another planet on which dust storms often run riot. Daratar's chemicals haven't reacted well to light, and it's now something of a dry husk.

Mass Effect 2 FAQ

Q It's a bit slow – how do I speed up scanning?

A Try tapping the scan button as you drag your cursor across the planet; you'll get a marginal speed increase. You can also upgrade your scanner.

Q What's the rarest of the ME minerals?

A Element Zero, by far. Its yield is rarely more than 6000 per planet and it's spread relatively thinly around the galaxy. Get as much as you possibly can.

Q Do I really need to bother with mining?

A Nope, it's a completely optional extra. Just don't expect many of your crew to survive the suicide mission if you don't bother.

ASSIGNMENTS The six best N7 tasks



Mission... MSV Estevanico
EDI picks up a distress call from Zanethu and finds the Estevanico hanging from a cliff. Shepard must navigate the wreck to recover data before it falls into the chasm below.



Mission... Mining The Canyon
A YMIR mining mech has been abandoned on Taitus. There's a vast deposit of Platinum but the robot is malfunctioning. Your job is to bring it back to life and recover the loot.



Mission... Endangered Research Station
Solar flares are bombarding Sinmara. Shepard lands at a research station to restore power to a protective shield barrier, running a gauntlet of deadly radiation. Short but unique.



Mission... Blood Pack Communications Relay
Manage the choking, chlorine-rich atmosphere and you'll be just fine on Tarith. Shepard and crew must follow a light beam to navigate the foggy, insect-infested environment.

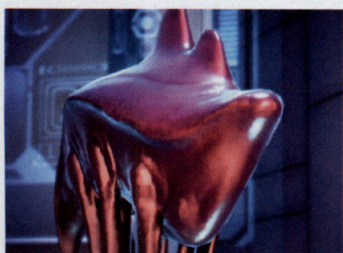


Mission... Javelin Missiles Launched
You have five minutes to stop missiles hitting an Alliance base. After fighting through hordes of Batarians, you can only save one part: a residential area or vital spaceport.



Mission... Abandoned Research Station
A naughty VI has locked down a research station, killing everyone on board. The 2001 homage is brilliantly atmospheric as you try to stop the program uploading to the Normandy.

ODDBALLS The four weirdest alien species



Hanar These floating jellyfish are from Kahje, a water planet. On land, they float, and are often derisively referred to as "jellies" by other races. They're extremely religious and have peculiar, softly spoken voices.



Vorcha Their home world is savage and crammed full, creating a culture of violence. They aren't a space-faring race, but are often recruited by pirates. In ME2 they side with the Collectors to improve their way of life.



Volus Natural salesmen whose weird biology means they have to wear protective suits in environments other than their home world. They're cowardly and sneaky, and are frustrated that they've yet to be invited to the Council.



Keepers A race created to serve as caretakers of the Citadel, which they've been doing for millions of years. No contact has ever been made with them, but you learn that they were made by the same group as the Reapers.

SECRET Four comedy Easter eggs



Uranus Try mining this planet, which is depleted of natural resources. EDI will say, unimpressed, "Really, Commander?" before telling you she's probing Uranus. Ho ho! But ask any space fan and they'll tell you it's pronounced "yoo-ran-uss".



Mordin sings During a chat about art, Mordin suddenly breaks out into song: a Gilbert and Sullivan number from musical *The Pirates of Penzance*, but with ME-themed lyrics. "I am the very model of a scientist Salaarriiaaaaaa..."



Blast from the past "You ever miss those talks we had on the elevators?" says Garrus to Tali. "No," she replies, firmly. This is a joke referencing the first game's irritatingly long loading times, which were disguised by endless lift rides.



Legion dances When you visit Legion in the Normandy, hang around for a while. He'll cycle through a few idle animations before, for no reason, busting some moves. He does the robot, which is fitting as, um, he's a robot.

SEXY TIME The six main romances



Seduce... Miranda Lawson
Flirting after her loyalty mission will result in her saying, "I wouldn't mind if you admired my body." This means you're in, and that, with continued flirting, Shepard will get lucky.



Seduce... Tali'Zorah vas Neema
After her loyalty mission she'll complain about a fever, then reveal that only people she really trusts can link with her and see beneath her suit. That person is you.



Seduce... Jack
You're given the chance to have casual fun with Jack, but this will ruin all chances of a relationship. Refuse, then chat until she lets her guard down. When you've made the sexy, she smiles for the first time. Aww.



Seduce... Jacob Taylor
If you're playing as lady Shepard, you'll get the chance to nail Jacob, but you have to make the first move. Show interest and he'll say he never saw you as an option, then you'll get the chance to ignite a romance.



Seduce... Garrus Vakarian
Complete Garrus' loyalty mission and you'll be able to have a thing. He's a bit nervous and unsure to begin with, but your love will manifest itself physically, eventually.



Seduce... Thane Krios
After gaining his loyalty, Shepard can pursue a romance with the assassin. You find him on the Normandy, crying over his past with his son. If you choose the right dialogue options, this results in kissing and romance.

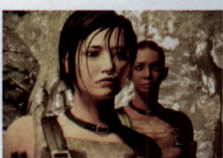
FIDELITY The six best loyalty missions



Complete... Grunt: Rite Of Passage
On Tuchanka, Grunt learns that to become a true Krogan, he has to pass through a gauntlet of enemies. Shepard helps, and it ends with the massive, snake-like Thresher Maw.



Complete... Jack: Subject Zero
Jack and the crew travel back to the facility where she was abused and given her biotic powers. The rainy planet of Pragia makes for a moody setting, with great shoot-outs.



Complete... Jacob: The Gift Of Greatness
Jacob's father's frigate, the *Hugo Gernsback*, went missing a decade ago, taking its crew with it. Now, a distress call is picked up on Aiea and we find out the true fate of pa Taylor.



Complete... Tali: Treason
This is the first chance we get to visit the Quarian Migrant Fleet; Shepard has to defend Tali in court after she's accused of treason. It's a well-written mission with a lot of outcomes, and some Geth-killing for good measure.



Complete... Legion: A House Divided
In this mission you go aboard a Geth-controlled station, getting an insight into how they live when they're not off serving Reapers. This is one of the game's most intense action missions.



Complete... Thane: Sins Of The Father
Thane learns that his son, Kolyat, has followed in his footsteps and become an assassin. You then have to help him stop the boy making the same mistakes as he did.

PlayStation's worst holiday destinations

Who wants to hang-around on boring old Earth? We can go anywhere in the galaxy... and beyond. These are some of the loveliest spots to visit on PlayStation, and when we say lovely, we often mean frightening and deadly. Holiday! Celebrate!

AEGIS VII

Game Dead Space 2

Locals Hostile. The Necromorphs grow out of human dead, twisting them into monsters that kill more humans.

Landscape Aegis VII is dusty and poisonous, and even less inviting now the Concordance Extraction Corporation has cracked a vast chunk of it right out of the surface. Illegally. Tsk.

Politics None.

Reason for visit To put the marker back and placate the Hive Mind controlling the Necromorph monsters.

Misery Rating ●●●●



E.D.N. III

Game Lost Planet

Locals Hostile. The Akrid have never really appreciated humanity's increasingly messy attempts to steal their planet.

Landscape Mountainous and snowy, E.D.N. III's gradual unfreezing adds to the chilly attitudes.

However, humans have screwed Earth up so badly that it's still better than going home. Based on a true story, then.

Politics Good old-fashioned hatred.

Reason for visit To kill off the indigenous population and take their resources. They should have called it USA II...

Misery Rating ●●●



CREMATORIA

Game Chronicles Of Riddick

Locals Hostile. All inhabitants are either violent prisoners, violent prison guards or extremely violent insane prisoners.

Landscape Crematoria is a jail planet, a barren desert world suffering temperature extremes so hideous that everything hides underground.

Politics Life is cheap.

Reason for visit To rot in prison.

Misery Rating ●●●●●



XEN

Game Half-Life

Locals Hostile. Beware angry, spurting white spider creatures and furious plant life.

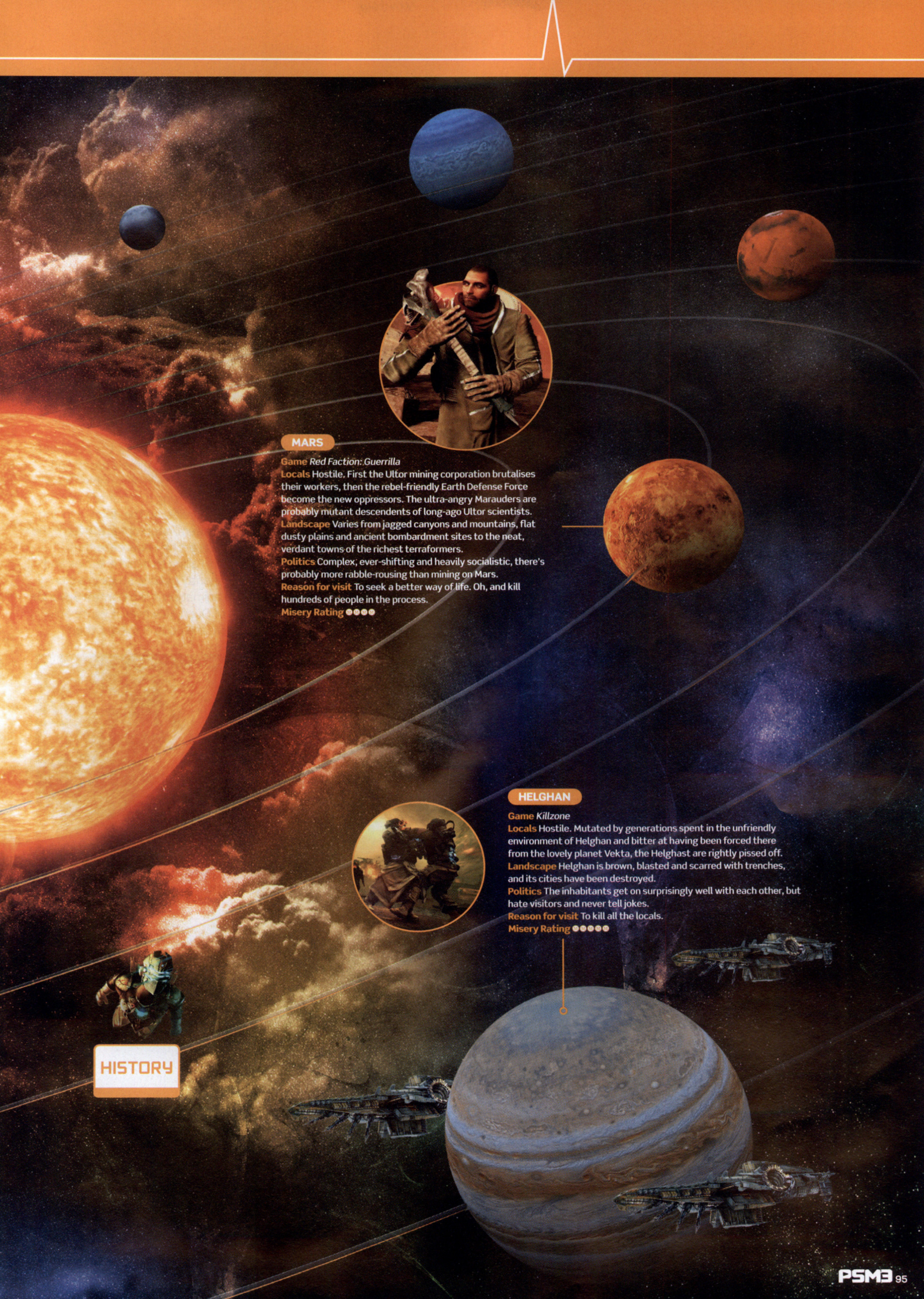
Landscape Rocky but often bouncy, Xen has no safety railings, and it's possible to fall right off into space. However, its water pools are particularly refreshing.

Politics Vigorous anti-tourist feelings.

Reason for visit To kill the Nihilanth, the giant alien thing holding the dimensional rift - caused by the resonance cascade accident at the beginning - open.

Misery Rating ●●●





MARS

Game *Red Faction: Guerrilla*

Locals Hostile. First the Ultor mining corporation brutalises their workers, then the rebel-friendly Earth Defense Force become the new oppressors. The ultra-angry Marauders are probably mutant descendants of long-ago Ultor scientists.

Landscape Varies from jagged canyons and mountains, flat dusty plains and ancient bombardment sites to the neat, verdant towns of the richest terraformers.

Politics Complex, ever-shifting and heavily socialistic, there's probably more rabble-rousing than mining on Mars.

Reason for visit To seek a better way of life. Oh, and kill hundreds of people in the process.

Misery Rating ●●●●



HELGHAN

Game *Killzone*

Locals Hostile. Mutated by generations spent in the unfriendly environment of Helghan and bitter at having been forced there from the lovely planet Vekta, the Helghast are rightly pissed off.

Landscape Helghan is brown, blasted and scarred with trenches, and its cities have been destroyed.

Politics The inhabitants get on surprisingly well with each other, but hate visitors and never tell jokes.

Reason for visit To kill all the locals.

Misery Rating ●●●●●



HISTORY


**RETRO
REVIEW**

Parasite Eve 2 is genetically superior survival horror

Matt Elliot

Science has given us many things – aeronautics, Naomi Hunter, Cher... But if *Parasite Eve 2*'s shooty mix of RPG and horror has taught us anything, it's that when the wrong people go paddling in the gene pool, science can turn very nasty. And by 'nasty' we mean face-eating, skin-tearingly fatal.

The game is set three years after the events of the first game, which saw hordes of mutant nasties gnawing on the inhabitants of New York City. Since then, protagonist Aya Brea has been recruited by MIST, a subdivision of the FBI that specialises in hunting down the neo-mitochondrial creatures (NMCs) responsible. It might sound like borderline nonsense, but the science-goes-balls backstory of *Parasite Eve* is surprisingly compelling stuff, based on the world of weird conceived by novelist Hideaki Sena.

The first *Parasite Eve* was spliced together from Square's traditional RPGs and popular survival horror elements. The sequel scalpels off RPG gristle, such as random battles and timed combat, and replaces them with giant Kevlar gun-elbows. From the first encounter with an NMC murder-chicken to the colossal, grinding boss battles, the combat is almost ceaseless.

Kill or be killed

Unlike other survival horror games, you get piles of ammo and you're positively encouraged to step up and gun down as many multi-assed genetic whoopsies as possible. This is where the one of the few remaining RPG elements puts it hand on your shoulder: you can only get stronger by killing creatures, so instead of avoiding them as in *Silent Hill*, sultry heroine Aya hunts them like the world's most heavily armed exterminator. It's an effective way of keeping things energetic but

the amount of fighting can become an inconvenience, especially since the action freezes every time you get into a scrap. Puzzles involve a hefty share of busywork and backtracking, and wading through the waves of constantly respawning fuglies can quickly turn to drudgery. It's a common problem with horror games of the era, but it still feels laughable that your ladytank heroine can have her progress impeded by locked doors and picket fences.

Being so action-heavy, the traditional tank control system feels dated and unacceptable. You're invariably faced with an increasing number of fast-moving enemies, so the disco-spinning controls seem inappropriate, even if the lock-on targeting helps ease the gun-pain. Failing to avoid enemies and consequently getting stuck in a clunky reload animation is like Dante's Seventh Circle of Ouch. However, if you're able to ignore the control foibles, then

The defining moment...

Shower-stopper



Aya is struggling with the obligatory insanity dreams that trouble so many action heroes, so she decides to clear her head with a refreshing (and, conveniently, sexy) shower. Unfortunately, it's cut short by a fat-kneed, gun-tongued chinzilla that starts smashing up the Dryfield motel. On go the clothes, out come the guns, cue enormous boss battle. Stupid clothes.





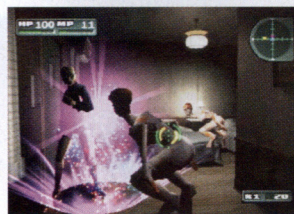
The Parasite Eve 2 thrill-o-graph



combat is often hectic and enjoyable. As well as being armed to her polished teeth, Aya can unleash the nasty with Parasite Energy; her equivalent of magic powers. Split into four schools, she can spend points accumulated by fighting NMCs on things like healing herself, increasing damage output or toasting enemies. It adds further punch to some already surprisingly deep combat, with secondary fire options for most guns and some engaging customisation options. If you like to suck up the death smell as you dispense mitochondrial horrors, snap a bayonet on your assault rifle for that personal, stabby touch.

Save us

While the fighting is pretty constant, the pacing can feel off at times. In particular, the time spent in the dusty yawnscape of Dryfield can drag. Amongst all the shooting there are moments of frustration; save points, for example, are sparse



and occasionally badly placed, while the overwhelming number of enemies means fighting your way to them even after the boss fights. The swap-shop inventory misery of Resi is thankfully missing, but that's one of the few areas where *Parasite Eve* was clearly ahead of its Capcom rivals. Compared to relatives like *Resident Evil* and *Dino Crisis*, the gameplay in *Parasite Eve* falls short.

Rendered Elevation

If that sounds disappointing, *Parasite Eve 2* pulls it back by presenting a compelling (and nuts) story. The pre-rendered backgrounds stand out from any of its third-person rivals from the time, boasting some snazzy ambient lighting and reflective surfaces. Back when it actually mattered, Square was always the raging mastodon of cut-scenes and *Parasite Eve* shows why: they effortlessly propel the story, providing personality to a game that's muted by having written speech. But the lack of voice work is the only area where the audio is a disappointment. The floaty ambient music by Naoshi Mizuta helps to gently build tension without ever being vulgar, and the NMCs are brought to life with every kind of screeching, belching, bellowing monster noise imaginable.

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? 3rd Birthday is on PSP; get to know Aya before you start playing dress-up.
Final thought The pinnacle of the series and a classy, frantic alternative to *Resident Evil*.

The Top 5

PE facts

1 Hideaki Sena

The first game was a sequel to a novel written by Hideaki Sena. He's also a pharmacologist, which explains why *PE* is rooted in science. A film based on the book was also released back in 1997.

2 Nightmare tunes

A two-disc, 66-track album of Naoshi Mizuta's soundtrack was released in 2000. It's described as more ambient than that of the first *Parasite Eve* game.

3 The dawn of Eve

The title refers to the antagonist from the first game, Eve. A different version of her appears in the second game, constructed from stolen bits of Aya's lovely DNA.

4 S-rank bonus

Completing the game with an S-rank will unlock Squall's gunblade weapon from *Final Fantasy VIII*.

5 Dressed to kill

Aya starts in her MIST outfit, but it's not long before she swaps it for an action miniskirt.



Only **PSM3** brings you...



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Wednesday June 01

① *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* in-depth

② *Portal 2*, *Virtua Tennis 4* - all PS3's biggest upcoming new releases, reviewed.

③ First-look at a top secret new action game. We'll have first info, screens and comment.

④ PS3's wildest games played: *Shadows Of The Damned*, *Alice: Madness Returns*, *Child Of Eden*

⑤ *Half-Life 2: The Complete History* - An epic timeline covering the storyline of *HL* and *Portal*

Contents subject to change

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